THE

WANDERER;

OR,

FEMALE DIFFICULTIES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

EVELINA; CECILIA; AND CAMILLA.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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THE

WANDERER.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER XLI.

FROM the time of this arrangement, the ascendance which Mr. Naird obtained over the mind of Elinor, by alternate assurances and alarms, relative to her chances of living to see Harleigh again, produced a quiet that gave time to the drafts, which were administered by the physician, to take effect, and she fell into a profound sleep. This, Mr. Naird said, might last till late the next day; Ellis, therefore, promising to be ready upon any summons, returned to her lodging.

Miss Matson, now, endeavoured to make some enquiries relative to the public suicide projected, if not accomplished, by Miss Joddrel, which was the universal subject of conversation at Brighthelmstone; but when she found it vain to hope for any details, she said, "Such accidents, Ma'am, make one really afraid of one's life with persons one knows nothing of. Pray, Ma'am, if it is not impertinent, do you still hold to your intention of giving up your pretty apartment?"

Ellis answered in the affirmative, desiring, with some surprise, to know, whether the question were in consequence of any apprehension of a similar event.

"By no means, Ma'am, from you," she replied; "you, Miss Ellis, who have been so strongly recommended; and protected by so many of our capital gentry; but what I mean is this. If you really intend to take a small lodging, why should not you have my little room again up stairs?"

"Is it not engaged to the lady I saw here this morning?"

"Why that, Ma'am, is precisely the person I have upon my mind to speak about. Why should I let her stay, when she's known to nobody, and is very bad pay, if I can have so genteel a young lady as you, Ma'am, that ladies in their own coaches come visiting?"

Ellis, recoiling from this preference, uttered words the most benevolent that she could suggest, of the unknown person who had excited her compassion: but Miss Matson gave them no attention. "When one has nothing better to do with one's rooms, Ma'am," she said, "it's sometimes as well, perhaps, to let them to almost one does not know who, as to keep them uninhabited; because living in them airs them; but that's no reason for letting them to one's own disadvantage, if one can do better. Now this person here, Ma'am, besides being poor, which, poor thing, may be she can't help; and being a foreigner, which, you know, Ma'am, is no great

recommendation; — besides all this, Miss Ellis, she has some very suspicious ways with her, which I can't make out at all; she goes abroad in a morning, Ma'am, by five of the clock, without giving the least account of her haunts. And that, Ma'am, has but an odd look with it!"

"Why so, Miss Matson? If she takes time from her own sleep to enjoy a little air and exercise, where can be the blame?"

"Air and exercise, Ma'am? People that have their living to get, and that a'n't worth a farthing, have other things to think of than air and exercise! She does not, I hope, give herself quite such airs as those!"

Ellis, disgusted, bid her good night; and, filled with pity for a person who seemed still more helpless and destitute than herself, resolved to see her the next day, and endeavour to offer her some consolation, if not assistance.

Before, however, this pleasing project could be put into execution, she was

again, nearly at day break, awakened by a summons from Selina to attend her sister, who, after quietly reposing many hours, had started, and demanded Harleigh and Ellis.

Ellis obeyed the call with the utmost expedition, but met the messenger returning to her a second time, as she was mounting the street which led to the lodging of Mrs. Maple, with intelligence that Elinor had almost immediately fallen into a new and sound sleep; and that Mr. Naird had ordered that no one should enter the room, till she again awoke.

Glad of this reprieve, Ellis was turning back, when she perceived, at some distance, Miss Matson's new lodger. The opportunity was inviting for her purposed offer of aid, and she determined to make some opening to an acquaintance.

This was not easy; for though the light feet of Ellis might soon have overtaken the quick, but staggering steps of the apparently distressed person whom

she pursued, she observed her to be in a state of perturbation that intimidated approach, as much as it awakened concern. Her handkerchief was held to her face; though whether to conceal it, or because she was weeping, could not readily be discovered: but her form and air penetrated Ellis with a feeling and an interest far beyond common curiosity; and she anxiously studied how she might better behold, and how address her.

The foreigner went on her way, looking neither to the right nor to the left, till she had ascended to the churchyard upon the hill. There stopping, she extended her arms, seeming to hail the full view of the wide spreading ocean; or rather, Ellis imagined, the idea of her native land, which she knew, from that spot, to be its boundary. The beauty of the early morning from that height, the expansive view, impressive, though calm, of the sea, and the awful solitude of the place, would have sufficed to occupy the mind of Ellis, had it not

been completely caught by the person whom she followed; and who now, in the persuasion of being wholly alone, gently murmured, "Oh ma chère patrie! — malheureuse, coupable, — mais toujours chère patrie!—ne te reverrai-je jamais!" *

Her voice thrilled to the very soul of Ellis, who, trembling, suspended, and almost breathless, stood watching her motions; fearing to startle her by an unexpected approach, and waiting to catch her eye.

But the mourner was evidently without suspicion that any one was in sight. Grief is an absorber: it neither seeks nor makes observation; except where it is joined with vanity, that always desires remark; or with guilt, by which remark is always feared.

Ellis, neither advancing nor receding, saw her next move solemnly forward, to bend over a small elevation of earth,

* "Oh my loved country! — unhappy, guilty — but for ever loved country! — shall I never see thee more!"

encircled by short sticks, intersected with rushes. Some of these, which were displaced, she carefully arranged, while uttering, in a gentle murmur, which the profound stillness of all around alone enabled Ellis to catch, "Repose toi bien, mon ange! mon enfant! le repos qui me fuit, le bonheur que j'ai perdu, la tranquilité precieuse de l'ame qui m'abandonne—que tout cela soit à toi, mon ange! mon enfant! Je ne te rappellerai plus ici! Je ne te rappellerais plus, même si je le pouvais. Loin de toi ma malheureuse destinée! je priai Dieu pour ta conservation quand je te possedois encore; quelques cruelles que fussent tes souffrances, et toute impuissante que j'etois pour les soulager, je priai Dieu, dans l'angoisse de mon ame, pour ta conservation! Tu n'est plus pour moi—et je cesse de te reclamer. Je te vois une ange! Je te vois exempt à jamais de douleur, de crainte, de pauvreté et de regrets: te reclamerai-je, donc, pour partager encore mes malheurs? Non! ne reviens plus à moi! Que je

te retrouve là—où ta felicité sera la mienne! Mais toi, prie pour ta malheureuse mère! que tes innocentes prières s'unissent à ses humbles supplications, pour que ta mère, ta pauvre mère, puisse se rendre digne de te rejoindre!" *

How long these soft addresses, which seemed to soothe the pious petitioner, might have lasted, had she not been dis-

* "Sleep on, sleep on, my angel child! May the repose that flies me, the happiness that I have lost, the precious tranquillity of soul that has forsaken me—be thine! for ever thine! my child! my angel! I cease to call thee back Even were it in my power, I would not call thee back. I prayed for thy preservation, while yet I had the bliss of possessing thee; cruel as were thy sufferings, and impotent as I found myself to relieve them, I prayed,—in the anguish of my soul,—I prayed for thy preservation! Thou art lost to me now!—yet I call thee back no more! I behold thee an angel! I see thee rescued for ever from sorrow, from alarm, from poverty, and from bitter recollections;—and shall I call thee back, to partake again my sufferings?—No! return to me no more! There, only, let me find thee, where thy felicity will be be mine!—but thou! O pray for thy unhappy mother! Let thy innocent prayers be united to her humble supplications, that thy mother, thy hapless mother, may become worthy to join thee!"

turbed, is uncertain: but she was startled by sounds of more tumultuous sorrow; by sobs, rather than sighs, that seemed burtsing forth from more violent, at least, more sudden affliction. She looked round, astonished; and saw Ellis leaning over a monument, and bathed in tears.

She arose, and, advancing towards her, said, in an accent of pity, "Helas, Madame, vous, aussi, pleurez vous votre enfant?" *

"Ah, mon amie! ma bien! ameè amiè!" cried Ellis, wiping her eyes, but vainly attempting to repress fresh tears; "t'aì-jè chercheè, t'aì-jè attendue, t'aì-jè si ardemment desireé, pour te retrouver ainsi? pleurant sur un tombeau? Et toi! —ne me rappelle tu pas? M'a tu oubliee? — Gabrielle! ma chère Gabrielle!" †

* "Alas, Madam! are you, also, deploring the loss of a child?"

† "Ah, my friend! my muchloved friend! have I sought thee, have I awaited thee, have I so fervently desired thy restoration — to find thee thus? Weeping over a grave? And thou — dost thou not recollect me? Hast thou forgotten me? — Gabriella! my loved Gabriella!"

"Juste ceil!" exclaimed the other, "que vois-je? Ma Julie! ma chère, ma tendre amie? Est il bien vrai?—O! peut il être vrai, qu'il y ait encore du bonheur ici bas pour moi?" *

Locked in each other's arms, pressed to each other's bosoms, they now remained many minutes in speechless agony of emotion, from nearly overpowering surprise, from gusts of ungovernable, irrepressible sorrow, and heart-piercing recollections; though blended with the tenderest sympathy of joy.

This touching silent eloquence, these unutterable conflicts between transport and pain, were succeeded by a reciprocation of enquiry, so earnest, so eager, so ardent, that neither of them seemed to have any sensation left of self, from excess of solicitude for the other; till

* "Gracious heaven! what do I behold? My Juliet! my tender friend? Can it be real?—O! can it, indeed, be true, that still any happiness is left on earth for me!"

Ellis, looking towards the little grave, said, "Ah! que ce ne soit plus question de moi?" *

"Ah, oui, mon amie," answered Gabriella, "ton histoire, tes malheurs, ne peuvent jamais être aussi terribles, aussi dechirants que les miens! tu n'as pas encore eprouvé le bonheur d'être mère — comment aurois-tu, donc, eprouvé, le plus accablant des malheurs? Oh! ce sont des souffrances qui n'ont point de nom; des douleurs qui rendent nulles toutes autres, que la perte d'un Etre pûr comme un ange, et tout à soi!" †

The fond embraces, and fast flowing

* "Ah! — upon me can you, yet, bestow a thought?"

† "True, my dear friend, true! thy history, thy misfortunes, can never be terrible, never be lacerating like mine! Thou hast not yet known the bliss of being a mother;—how, then, canst thou have experienced the most overwhelming of calamities! a suffering that admits of no description! a woe that makes all others seem null — the loss of a being pure, spotless as a cherub — and wholly our own!"

tears of Ellis, evinced the keen sensibility with which she participated in the sorrows of this afflicted mother, whom she strove to draw away from the fatal spot; reiterating the most urgent enquiries upon every other subject, to attract her, if possible, to yet remaining, to living interests. But these efforts were utterly useless. "Restons, restons où nous sommes!" she cried: "c'est ici que je te parlerai; c'est ici que je t'écôuterai; ici, où je passe les seuls momens que j'arrache à la misere, et au travail. Ne crois pas que de pleurer est ce qu'il y a le plus à craindre! Oh! qu'il ne t'arrive jamais de savoir que de pleurer, même sur le tombeau de tout ce qui vous est le plus cher, est un soulagement, un dèlice, auprès du dur besoin de travailler, la mort dans le cœur, pour vivre, pour exister, lorsque la vie a perdu toutes ses charmes!" *

* "Here, here let us stay! 'tis here I can best speak to thee! 'tis here, I can best listen;—here, where I pass every moment that I can snatch from

Seated then upon the monument which was nearest to the little grave, Gabriella related the principal events of her life, since the period of their separation. These, though frequently extraordinary, sometimes perilous, and always touchingly disastrous, she recounted with a rapidity almost inconceivable; distinctly, nevertheless, marking the several incidents, and the courage with which she had supported them: but when, these finished, she entered upon the history of the illness that had preceded the death of her little son, her voice tremblingly slackened its velocity, and unconsciously lowered its tones; and, far from continuing with the same quickness or precision, every circum-

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penury and labour! Think not that to weep is what is most to be dreaded; oh never mayst thou learn, that to weep — though upon the tomb of all that has been most dear to thee upon earth, is a solace, is a feeling of softness, nay of pleasure, compared with the hard necessity of toiling, when death has seized upon the very heart, merely to breathe, to exist, after life has lost all its charms!"

stance was dwelt upon as momentous; every recollection brought forth long and endearing details; every misfortune seemed light, put in the scale with his loss; every regret seemed concentrated in his tomb!

Six o'clock, and seven, had tolled unheeded, during this afflicting, yet soothing recital; but the eighth hour striking, when the tumult of sorrow was subsiding into the sadness of grief, the sound caught the ear of Gabriella, who, hastily rising, exclaimed, " Ah, voilà que je suis encore susceptible de plaisir, puisque ta société m'a fait oublier les tristes et penibles devoirs, qui m'appellent à des tâches qui — à peine — m'empêchent de mourir de faim!" *

At these words, all the fortitude hitherto sustained by Juliet, — for the borrowed name of Ellis will now be

* " See, if I am not still susceptible of pleasure! Thy society has made me forget the sad and painful duties that call me hence, to tasks that snatch me, — with difficulty, — from perishing by famine!"

dropt,—utterly forsook her. Torrents of tears gushed from her eyes, and lamentations, the bitterest, broke from her lips. She could bear, she cried, all but this; all but beholding the friend of her heart, the daughter of her benefactress, torn from the heights of happiness and splendour; of merited happiness, of hereditary splendour; to be plunged into such depths of distress, and overpowered with anguish.

"Ah! que je te reconnois bien à ce trait!" cried Gabriella, while a tender smile tried to force its way through her tears: "cette ame si noble! si inebralable pour elle-même, si douce, si compatissante pour tout autre! que de souvenirs chers et touchans ne se presentent, à cet instant, à mon cœur! Ma chère Julie! il est bien vrai, donc, que je te vois, que je te retrouve encore! et, en toi, tout ce qú'il y a de plus aimable, de plus pûr, et de plus digne! Comment ai-je pû te revoir, sans retrouver la felicité? Je me sens presque coupable

de pouvoir t'embrasser, — et de pleurer encore !" *

Forcing herself, then, from the fatal but cherished spot, she must hasten, she said, to her daily labour, lest night should surprise her, without a roof to shelter her head. But Juliet now detained her; clung and wept round her neck, and could not even endeavour to resign herself to the keen woes, and deplorable situation of her friend. She had come over, she said, buoyed up with the exquisite hope of joining the darling companion of her earliest youth; of sharing her fate, and of mitigating her hardships: but this softening expecta-

* "Ah, how I know thee by that trait! thy soul so noble! so firm in itself; so soft, so commiserating for every other! what tender, what touching recollections present themselves at this instant to my heart! Dearest Juliet! is it, then, indeed no dream, that I have found — that I behold thee again? and, in thee, all that is most exemplary, most amiable, and most worthy upon earth! How is it I can recover thee, and not recover happiness? I almost feel as if I were criminal, that I can embrace thee, — yet weep on!"

tion was changed into despondence, in discovering her, thus, a prey to unmixt calamity; not alone bowed down by the general evils of revolutionary events; punished for plans in which she had borne no part, and for crimes of which she had not even any knowledge; — not only driven, without offence, or even accusation, from prosperity and honours, to exile, to want, to misery, and to labour; but suffering, at the same time, the heaviest of personal afflictions, in the immediate loss of a darling child: the victim, in all probability, to a melancholy change of life, and to sudden privation of customary care and indulgence!

The task of consolation seemed now to devolve upon Gabriella: the feelings of Juliet, long checked by prudence, by fortitude, by imperious necessity; and kept in dignified but hard command; having once found a vent, bounded back to nature and to truth, with a vivacity of keen emotion that made them nearly uncontrollable. Nature and truth, — which

invariably retain an elastic power, that no struggles can wholly subdue; and that always, however curbed, however oppressed,—lie in wait for opportunity to spring back to their rights. Her tears, permitted, therefore, at length, to flow, nearly deluged the sad bosom of her friend.

"Helas, ma Julie! sœur de mon ame!" cried Gabriella, "ne t'abandonne pas à la douleur pour moi! mais parles moi, ma tendre amie, parles moi de ma mère! Où l'a tu quitté? Et comment? Et à quelle epoque?—La plus digne, la plus cherie des mères! Helas! eloignée de nous deux, comment saura-t-elle se resigner à tant de malheurs?"*

Juliet uttered the tenderest assurances, that she had left the Marchioness,

* "Alas, my Juliet! sister of my soul! abandon not thyself to sorrow for me! but speak to me, my tender friend, speak to me of my mother! where didst thou leave her? And how? And at what time? The most precious of mothers! Alas! separated from us both,—how will she be able to support such accumulation of misfortunes!"

well; and had left her by her own injunctions, to join her darling daughter; to whom, by a conveyance that had been deemed secure, she had previously written the plan of the intended journey; with a desire that a few lines of direction, relative to their meeting, under cover to L. S., to be left till called for, might be sent to the post-offices both of Dover and Brighthelmstone; as it was not possible to fix at which spot Juliet might land. The initials L. S. had been fixed upon by accident.

Filial anxiety, now, took place of maternal sufferings, and Gabriella could only talk of her mother; demanding how she looked, and how she supported the long separation, the ruinous sacrifices, and the perpetual alarms, to which she must have been condemned since they had parted; expressing her own surprise, that she had borne to dwell upon any other subject than this, which now was the first interest of her heart; yet ceasing to wonder, when she con-

templated the fatal spot where her meeting with Juliet had taken place.

Each, now, deeply lamented the time and consolation that had been lost, from their mutual ignorance of each other's abode. Juliet related her fruitless search upon arriving in London; and Gabriella explained, that, during three lingering, yet ever regretted months, she had watched over her dying boy, without writing a single line; to spare her absent friends the knowledge of her suspensive wretchedness. Since the irreparable certainty which had followed, she had sent two letters to her beloved mother, with her address at Brighthelmstone; but both must have miscarried, as she had received no answer. That Juliet had not traced her in London was little wonderful, as, to elude the curiosity excited by a great name, she had passed, in setting out for Brighthelmstone, by a common one. And to that change, joined to one so similar on the part of Juliet, it must have been owing that they

had never heard of each other, though residents of the same place. Juliet, nevertheless, was astonished, in defiance of all alteration of attire and appearance, that she had not instantly recognized the air and form of her elegant and high bred Gabriella. But, equally unacquainted with her indigence, which was the effect of sundry cruel accidents, and with the loss of her child; no expectation was awakened of finding her either in so distressed or so solitary a condition. Now, however, Juliet continued, that fortunately, though, alas! not happily, they had met, they would part no more. Juliet was fully at liberty to go whithersoever her friend would lead, the hope of obtaining tidings of that beloved friend, having alone kept her stationary thus long at Brighthelmstone; where she could now leave the address of Gabriella, at the post-office, for their mutual letters: and, as insuperable obstacles impeded her writing herself, at present, to the Marchion-

ess, Gabriella might make known, in a covert manner, that they were together, and were both safe.

And why, Gabriella demanded, could not Juliet write herself?

"Alas!" Juliet replied, "I must not even be named!"

"Eh, pour quoi?—n'a-t-tu pas vû tes parens?—Peut on te voir sans t'aimer? te connoître sans te cherir? Non, ma Julie, non! tu n'a qu'à te montrer."*

Juliet, changing colour, dejectedly, and not without confusion, besought her friend, though for reasons that could neither be assigned nor surmounted, to dispense, at present, with all personal narration. Yet, upon perceiving the anxious surprise occasioned by a request so little expected, she dissolved into tears, and offered every communication, in preference to causing even transitory pain to her best friend.

* "And why? Hast thou not seen thy relations?—Canst thou be seen, and not loved?—known, and not cherished? No, my Juliet, no! thou hast only to appear!"

" O loin de moi cette exigeance!" cried Gabriella, with energy, " Ne sais-je pas bien que ton bon esprit, juste emule de ton excellent cœur, te fera parler lorsqu'il le faudra? Ne me confierai-je pas à toi, dont la seule étude est le bonheur des autres?" *

Juliet, not more penetrated by this kindness, than affected by a facile resignation, that shewed the taming effect of misfortune upon the natural vivacity of her friend, could answer only by caresses and tears.

" Eh mon oncle?" continued Gabriella; " mon tout-aimable et si pieux oncle? où est il?" *

" Monseigneur l'Eveque?" cried Juliet, again changing colour; " Oh ouì!

* " Oh far from me be any such insistence! Know I not well that thy admirable judgment, just counterpart of thy excellent heart, will guide thee to speak when it is right? Shall I not entirely confide in thee?—In thee, whose sole study has been always the good and happiness of others?"

* " And my uncle! My so amiable, so pious uncle? Where is he?"

tout-aimable! sans tâche et sans reproche!—Il sera bientôt, je crois, ici;—ou j'aurois de ses nouvelles; et alors—ma destinée me sera connue!" *

A deep sigh tried to swallow these last words. Gabriella looked at her, for a moment, with re-awakened earnestness, as if repentant of her own acquiescence; but the sight of encreasing disturbance in the countenance of Juliet, checked her rising impatience; and she quietly said, "Ah! s'il arrive ici!—si je le revois,—j'eprouverai encore, au milieu de tant de desolation, un mouvement de joie!—tel que toi, seule, jusqu'à ce moment, a su m'en inspirer!" †

Juliet, with fond delight, promised to

* "My lord the Bishop?—Oh yes! yes!—amiable indeed!—pure!—without blemish!—He will soon, I believe, be here; or I shall have some intelligence from him; and then—my fate will be known to me!"

† "Ah, should he come hither!—should I be blest again by his sight, I should feel, once mor , even in the midst of my desolation, a sensation of joy—such as thou, only, as yet, hast been able to re-awaken!"

be governed wholly, in her future plans, occupations, and residence, by her beloved friend.

"C'est à Brighthelmstone, donc," cried Gabriella, returning to the little grave; "c'est ici que nous demeurions! ici, où il me semble que je n'ai pas encore tout à fait perdu mon fils!"

Then, tenderly embracing Juliet, "Ah, mon amie!" she cried, with a smile that blended pleasure with agony; "ah, mon amie! c'est à mon enfant que je te dois! c'est en pleurant sur ses restes que je t'ai retrouvée! Ah, oui!" passionately bending over the grave; "c'est à toi, mon ange! mon enfant! que je dois mon amie! Ton tombeau, même, me porte bonheur! tes cendres veulent me benir! tes restes, ton ombre veulent du bien à ta pauvre mère!" *

* "'Tis at Brighthelmstone, then,—'tis here that we must dwell! Here, where I seem not yet, entirely, to have lost my darling boy! Oh my friend! my dearest, best loved friend! 'tis to him—to my child, that I am indebted for seeing thee again 'tis in visiting his remains that I have met my Juliet!

With difficulty, now, Juliet drew her away from the fond, fatal spot; and slowly, and silently, while clinging to each other with heartfelt affection, they returned together to their lodgings.

—Oh thou! my child! my angel! 'tis to thee, to thee, I am indebted for my friend! Even thy grave offers me comfort! even thy ashes desire to bless me! Thy remains, thy shadow, would do good, would bring peace to thy unhappy mother!"

CHAPTER XLII.

ELINOR, kept in order by a continual expectation of seeing Harleigh, ceased to require the presence of Juliet; who, but for the sorrows of her friend, would have experienced a felicity to which she had long been a stranger, the felicity of being loved because known; esteemed and valued because tried and proved. The consideration that is the boon of even the most generous benevolence, however it may soothe the heart, cannot elevate the spirits: but here, good opinion was reciprocated, trust was interchanged, confidence was mutual.

The affliction of Gabriella, though of a more permanent nature, because from an irreparable cause, was yet highly susceptible of consolation from friend-

ship; and when once the acute emotions, arising from the tale of woe which she had had to relate, at the meeting, were abated, the charm which the presence of Juliet dispensed, and the renewal of early ideas, pristine feelings, and first affections, soon reflected back their influence upon her own mind; which gradually strengthened, and insensibly revived.

Juliet immediately resigned her large apartment, and fixed herself in the small room of Gabriella. There they settled that they would live together, work together, share their little profits, and endure their failures, in common. There they hoped to recover their peace of mind, if not to re-animate their native spirits; and to be restored to the harmony of social sympathy, if not to that of happiness.

Yet, it was with difficulty that they learnt to enjoy each other's society, upon such terms as their altered condition

now exacted; where the eye must never be spared from laborious business, to search, or to reciprocate a sentiment, in those precious moments of endearing converse, which, unconsciously, swell into hours, ere they are missed as minutes. Their intercourse was confined to oral language alone. The lively intelligence, the rapid conception, the arch remark, the cordial smile; which give grace to kindness, playfulness to counsel, gentleness to raillery, and softness even to reproach; these, the expressive sources of delight, and of comprehension, in social commerce, they were fain wholly to relinquish; from the hurry of unremitting diligence, and undivided attention to manual toil.

Nevertheless, to inhale the same air, and to feel the consoling certitude, that they were no longer cast wholly upon pity, or charity, for good opinion, were blessings that filled their thoughts with gratitude to Providence, and

brought back calm and comfort to their minds.

Still, at every sun-rise, Gabriella visited the ashes of her little son; where she poured forth, in maternal enthusiasm, thanks and benedictions upon his departed spirit, that her earliest friend, the chosen sharer of her happier days, was restored to her in the hour of her desolation; and restored to her There,—on that fatal, yet adored spot, which contained the ever loved, though lifeless remains of her darling boy.

Juliet, in this peaceful interval, learnt, from the voluble Selina, all that had been gathered from Mrs. Golding relative to the seclusion of Elinor.

Elinor had travelled post to Portsmouth, whence she had sailed to the Isle of Wight. There, meeting with a foreign servant out of place, she engaged him in her service, and bid him purchase some clothes of an indigent emigrant. She then dressed herself grotesquely

yet, as far as she could, decently, in man's attire; and, making her maid follow her example, returned to the neighbourhood of Brighthelmstone, and took lodgings, in the character of a foreigner, who was deaf and dumb, at Shoreham; where, uninterruptedly, and unsuspectedly, she resided. Here, by means of her new domestic, she obtained constant intelligence of the proceedings of Juliet; and she was no sooner informed of the musical benefit, in which an air, with an harp-accompaniment, was to be performed by Miss Ellis, then she sent her new attendant to the assembly-room, to purchase a ticket. Golding, who went thither with the lackey, met Harleigh in the street, as he was quitting the lodgings of Juliet.

The disguise of the maid saved her from being recognised; but her tidings set h r mistress on fire. The moment seemed now arrived for the long-destined catastrophe; and the few days preceding

the benefit, were spent in its preparation. Careless of what was thought, Elinor, had since, casually, though not confidentially, related, that her intention had been to mount suddenly into the orchestra, during the performance of Juliet; and thence to call upon Harleigh, whom she could not doubt would be amongst the audience; and, at the instant of his joining them, proclaim to the whole world her immortal passion, and expire between them. But the fainting fit of Juliet, and its uncontrollable effect upon Harleigh, had been so insupportable to her feelings, as to precipitate her design. She acknowledged that she had studied how to die without torture, by inflicting a wound by which she might bleed gently to death, while indulging herself, to the last moment, in pouring forth to the idol of her heart, the fond effusions of her ardent, but exalted passion.

The tranquillity of Elinor, built upon

false expectations, could not be long unshaken: impatience and suspicion soon took its place, and Mr. Naird was compelled to acknowledge, that Mr. Harleigh had set out upon a distant tour, without leaving his address, even at his own house; where he had merely given orders that his letters should be forwarded to a friend.

The rage, grief, and shame of the wretched Elinor, now nearly destroyed, in a moment, all the cares and the skill of Mr. Naird, and of her physician. She impetuously summoned Juliet, to be convinced that she was not a party in the elopement; and was only rescued from sinking into utter despair, by adroit exhortations from Mr. Naird, to yield patiently to his ordinances, lest she should yet die without a last view of Harleigh. This plea led her, once more, though with equal disgust to herself and to the whole world, to submit to every medical direction, that might give her sufficient strength to devise means for

her ultimate project; and to put them into practice.

Mr. Naird archly confessed, in private, to Juliet, that the real danger or safety of Miss Joddrel, so completely hung upon giving the reins, or the curb, to her passions, that she might, without much difficulty, from her resolution to die no other death than that of heroic love, in the presence of its idol, be spurred on, while awaiting, or pursuing, its object, to the verge of a very comfortable old age.

He acknowledged himself, also, secretly entrusted with the abode of Mr. Harleigh.

Elinor, when somewhat calmed, demanded of Juliet when, and how, her meetings with Harleigh had been renewed.

Juliet recounted what had passed; sparing such details as might be hurtful, and solemnly protesting that all intercourse was now at an end.

With a view to draw Elinor from this

agitating subject, she then related, at full length, her meeting, in the church-yard, with the friend whom she had so long vainly sought.

In a short time afterwards, feeling herself considerably advanced towards a recovery, Elinor, impetuously, again sent for Juliet, to say, " What is your plan? Tell it me sincerely! What is it you mean to do?"

Juliet answered, that her choice was small, and that her means were almost null: but when she lamented the severe DIFFICULTIES of a FEMALE, who, without fortune or protection, had her way to make in the world, Elinor, with strong derision, called out, " Debility and folly! Put aside your prejudices, and forget that you are a dawdling woman, to remember that you are an active human being, and your FEMALE DIFFICULTIES will vanish into the vapour of which they are formed. Misery has taught me to conquer mine! and I am now as ready to defy the world, as the

world can be ready to hold me up to ridicule. To make people wise, you must make them indifferent; to give them courage, you must make them desperate. 'Tis then, only, that we throw aside affectation and hypocrisy, and act from impulse."

Laughing, now, though with bitterness, rather than gaiety, "What does the world say," she cried, "to find that I still live, after the pompous funeral orations, declaimed by myself, upon my death? Does it suspect that I found second thoughts best, and that I delayed my execution, thinking, like the man in the song,

> That for sure I could die whenever I would,
> But that I could live but as long as I could?

"Well, ye that laugh, laugh on! for I, when not sick of myself, laugh too! But, to escape mockery, we must all be guided one by another; all do, and all say, the very same thing. Yet why? Are we alike in our thoughts? Are we

alike in our faces? No. Happily, however, that soporiferous monotony is beginning to get obsolete. The sublimity of Revolution has given a greater shake to the minds of men, than to the kingdoms of the earth."

After pausing, then, a few minutes, "Ellis," she cried, "if you are really embarrassed, why should you not go upon the stage? You know how transcendently you act."

"That which might seem passable in a private representation," Juliet answered, "might, at a public theatre—"

"Pho, pho, you know perfectly well your powers. But you blight them, I suppose, yourself, with anathemas, from excommunicating scruples? You are amongst the cold, the heartless, the ungifted, who, to discredit talents, and render them dangerous, leave their exercise to vice, by making virtue fear to exert, or even patronize them?"

"No, Madam, indeed," cried Juliet: "I admire, most feelingly, the noble

art of declamation:—how, then, can I condemn the profession which gives to it life and soul? which personifies the most exalted virtues, which brings before us the noblest characters, and makes us witnesses to the sublimest actions? The stage, well regulated, would be the school of juvenile emulation; would soothe sorrow in the unhappy, and afford merited relaxation to the laborious. Reformed, indeed, I wish it, and purified; but not destroyed."

"Why, then, do you disdain to wear the buskins?"

"Disdain is by no means the word. Talents are a constant source to me of delight; and those who,—rare, but in existence,—unite, to their public exercise, private virtue and merit, I honour and esteem even more than I admire; and every mark I could shew, to such, of consideration,—were I so situated as to bestow, not require protection!—I should regard as reflecting credit not on them, but on myself."

" Pen and ink!" cried Elinor, impatiently: " I'll write for you to the manager this moment!—"

" Hold, Madam!" cried Juliet smiling: " Much as I am enchanted with the art, I am not going to profess it! On the contrary, I think it so replete with dangers and improprieties, however happily they may sometimes be combatted by fortitude and integrity, that, when a young female, not forced by peculiar circumstances, or impelled by resistless genius, exhibits herself a willing candidate for public applause;—she must have, I own, other notions, or other nerves, than mine!"

" Ellis, Ellis! you only fear to alarm, or offend the men—who would keep us from every office, but making puddings and pies for their own precious palates!—Oh woman! poor, subdued woman! thou art as dependant, mentally, upon the arbitrary customs of man, as man is, corporally, upon the established laws of his country!"

She now grew disturbed, and went on warmly, though nearly to herself.

"By the oppressions of their own statutes and institutions, they render us insignificant; and then speak of us as if we were so born! But what have we tried, in which we have been foiled? They dare not trust us with their own education, and their own opportunities for distinction: —I except the article of fighting; against that, there may, perhaps, be some obstacles: but to be condemned, as weaker vessels in intellect, because, inferiour in bodily strength and stature, we cannot cope with them as boxers and wrestlers! They appreciate not the understandings of one another by such manual and muscular criterions. They assert not that one man has more brains than another, because he is taller; that he is endowed with more illustrious virtues, because he is stouter. They judge him not to be less ably formed for haranguing in the senate; for administering justice in the courts of law; for teaching science at the

universities, because he could ill resist a bully, or conquer a footpad! No!—Woman is left out in the scales of human merit, only because they dare not weigh her!"

Then, turning suddenly to Ellis, "And you, Ellis, you!" she cried, "endowed with every power to set prejudice at defiance, and to shew and teach the world, that woman and man are fellow-creatures, you, too, are coward enough to bow down, unresisting, to this thraldom?"

Juliet hazarded not any reply.

"Yet what futile inconsistency dispenses this prejudice! This Woman, whom they estimate thus below, they elevate above themselves. They require from her, in defiance of their examples!—in defiance of their lures!—angelical perfection. She must be mistress of her passions; she must never listen to her inclinations; she must not take a step of which the purport is not visible; she must not pursue a measure of which she cannot publish the motive; she must

always be guided by reason, though they deny her understanding!—Frankness, the noblest of our qualities, is her disgrace;—sympathy, the most exquisite of our feelings, is her bane!—"

She stopt here, conscious, colouring, indignant, and dropt the subject, to say, "Tell me, I again demand, what is it you mean to do? Return to your concert-singing and harping?"

"Ah, Madam," cried Juliet, reproachfully, "can you believe me not yet satisfied with attempting any sort of public exhibition?

"Nay, nay," cried Elinor, resuming her careless gaiety, "what passed that evening will only have served to render you more popular. You may make your own terms, now, with the managers, for the subscription will fill, merely to get a stare at you. If I were poor myself, I would engage to acquire a large fortune, in less than a week, by advertising, at two-pence a head, a sight of the lady that stabbed herself."

"What, however," she continued, "is your purpose? Will you go and live with Mrs. Ireton? She is just come hither to give her favourite lap-dog a six weeks' bathing. What say you to the place of her toad-eater? It may be a very lucrative thing; and I can procure it for you with the utmost ease. It is commonly vacant every ten days. Besides, she has been dying to have you in her toils, ever since she has known that you spurned the proposition, when it was started by Mrs. Howel."

Juliet protested, that any species of fatigue would be preferable to subservience of such a sort.

"Perhaps you are afraid of seeing too much of Ireton? Be under no apprehension. He makes it a point not to visit her. He cannot endure her. Besides, 'tis so rustic, he says, to have a mother!"

Juliet answered, that her sole plan, now, was to be guided by her friend.

"And who is this friend? Is she of

the family of the Incognitas, also? What do you call her? — L. S.?"

Juliet only replied by stating their project of needle-work.

Elinor scoffed the notion; affirming that they would not obtain a morsel of bread to a glass of water, above once in three days. She felt, nevertheless, sufficient respect to the design of the noble fugitive, to send her a sealed note of what she called her approbation.

This note Juliet took in charge. It contained a draft for fifty pounds.

Ah, generous Elinor! thought Juliet, tears of gratitude glistening in her eyes: what a mixture of contrasting qualities sully, and ennoble your character in turn! Ah, why, to intellects so strong, a heart so liberal, a temper so gay, is there not joined a better portion of judgment, a larger one of diffidence, a sense of feminine propriety, and a mind rectified by religion, — not abandoned, uncontrolled, to imagination?

Gabriella, though truly touched by a

generosity so unexpected, declined accepting its fruits; not being yet, she said, so helpless, however poor, as to prefer pecuniary obligation to industry. She would leave, therefore, the donation, for those who had lost the resources of independence which she yet possessed — youth and strength.

The tender admiration of Juliet forbade all remonstrance, and excluded any surprise. She well knew, and had long seen, that the distress which is the offspring of public calamity, not of private misfortune, however it may ruin prosperity, never humbles the mind.

Gabriella, in a letter of elegant acknowledgements, to obviate any accusation of undue pride, solicited the assistance of Elinor, in procuring orders for embroidery, amongst the ladies of her acquaintance.

Elinor, zealous to serve, and fearless to demand, instantly attacked, by note or by message, every rich female at Brighthelmstone; urging the generous, and

shaming the niggardly, till there was scarcely a woman of fortune in the place, who had not given, or promised, a commission for some fine muslin-work.

The two friends, through this commanding protection, began their new plan of life under the most favourable auspices; and had soon more employment than time, though they limited themselves to five hours for sleep; though their meals were rather swallowed than eaten; and though they allowed not a moment for any kind of recreation, of rest, or of exercise; save the sacred visit, which they unfailingly made together, at break of day, to the little grave in the church-yard upon the hill.

Yet here first, since her arrival on the British shores, the immediate rapturous moment of landing, and the fortnight passed with Lady Aurora Granville excepted, here first sweet contentment, soft hopes, and gentle happiness visited the bosom of Juliet. No privation was hard, no toil was severe, no application was tedious, while the friend of her

heart was by her side; whose sorrows she could mitigate, whose affections she could share, and whose tears she could sometimes chace.

But this relief was not more exquisite than it was transitory; a week only had passed in delicious repose, when Gabriella received intelligence that her husband was taken ill.

Whatever was her reluctance to quitting the spot, where her memory was every moment fed with cherished recollections, she could not hesitate to depart; but, when Juliet, in consonance with her inclination and her promise, prepared to accompany her, that hydra-headed intruder upon human schemes and desires, Difficulty, arose, in as many shapes as she could form projects, to impede her wishes. Money they had none: even for the return to town of Gabriella, her husband was fain to have recourse for aid to certain admirable persons, whose benevolence had enabled her, upon the illness of her son, to quit it for Brighthelmstone: and, in

a situation of indigence so obvious could they propose carrying away with them the work with which they were entrusted? Juliet, indeed, had still Harleigh's bank notes in her possession; but she turned inflexibly from the temptation of adopting a mode of conduct, which she had always condemned as weak and degrading; that of investing circumstance with decision, in conscientious dilemmas.

These terrible obstacles broke into all their plans, their wishes, their happiness; involved them in new distress, deluged them in tears, and, after every effort with which ingenious friendship could combat them, ended in compelling a separation. Gabriella embraced, with pungent affliction, the sorrowing Juliet; shed her last bitter tears over the grave of her lost darling, and, by the assistance of the angelic beings* already hinted at, whose delicacy, whose feeling, whose

* Residing in, and,—in 1795!—at the foot of Norbury Park.

respect for misfortune, made their beneficence as balsamic to sensibility, as it was salutary to want, returned alone to the capital.

Juliet thus, perforce, remaining, and once again left to herself, was nearly overwhelmed with grief at a stroke so abrupt and unexpected; so ruinous to her lately acquired contentment, and dearly prized social enjoyment. Yet she suffered not regret and disappointment to consume her time, however cruelly they preyed upon her spirits, and demolished her comfort. Solitarily she continued the employment which she had socially begun; but without relaxing in diligence and application, without permitting herself the smallest intermission that could be avoided: urged not alone to maintain herself, and to replace what she had touched of the deposit of Harleigh, but excited, yet more forcibly, by the fond hope of rejoining her friend; to which she eagerly looked forward, as the result and reward of her activity and labour.

CHAPTER XLIII.

LEFT thus to herself, and devoted to incessant work, Juliet next, had the vexation to learn, how inadequate for entering into any species of business was a mere knowledge of its theory.

She had concluded that, in consecrating her time and her labours to so simple an employment as needle-work, she secured herself a certain, though an hardly earned maintenance: but, as her orders became more extensive, she found that neither talents for what she undertook, nor even patronage to bring them into notice, was sufficient; a capital also was requisite, for the purchase of frames, patterns, silver and gold threads, spangles, and various other articles; to procure which, she was forced, in the very commencement of her new career, again to run in debt.

Alas! she cried, where business is not necessary to subsistence, how little do we know, believe, or even conceive, it's various difficulties! Imagination may paint enjoyments; but labours and hardships can be judged only from experience!

She was equally, also, unprepared for continual and vexatious delays of payment. Her work was frequently, when best executed, returned for capricious alterations; or set apart for some distant occasion, and forgotten; or received and worn, with no retribution but by promise. Even the few who possessed more consideration, seemed to estimate her time and her toil as nothing, because she was brought forward by recommendation; and to pay debts of common justice, with the parade of generosity.

Yet, vanity and false reasoning set apart, the ladies for whom she worked were neither hard of heart nor illiberal; but they had never known distress! and were too light and unreflecting to weigh

the circumstances by which it might be produced, or prevented.

To save time, and obviate innumerable mortifications, Juliet, at first, employed a commissioner to carry home her work, and to deliver her bills; but he returned always with empty messages, that if Miss Ellis would call herself, she should be paid. Yet when, with whatever reluctance, she complied, she was ordinarily condemned to wait in passages, or anti-chambers, for whole hours, and even whole mornings; which were commonly ended by an excuse, through a footman, or lady's maid, that Lady or Miss such a one was too much engaged, or too much indisposed, to see her till the next day. The next day, when, with renewed expectation, she again presented herself, the same scene was re-acted; though the passing to and fro of various comers and goers, proved that it was only to herself her fair creditor was invisible.

Nevertheless, if she mentioned that she had some pattern, or some piece of work, finished for any other lady to exhibit, she was immediately admitted; though still, with regard to payment, she was desired to call again in the evening, or the next morning, with a new bill; her old one happening, unluckily, to be always lost or mislaid; and not seldom, while stopping in an anti-room, to arrange her packages, she heard exclamations of "How amazingly tiresome is that Miss Ellis! pestering one so, always, for her money!"

Is it possible, thought Juliet, that common humanity, nay, common sense, will not tell these careless triflers, that their complaint is a lampoon upon themselves? Will no reflexion, no feeling point out to them, that the time which they thus unmercifully waste in humiliating attendance, however to themselves it may be a play-thing, if not a drug, is, to those who subsist but by their use of it, shelter, clothing, and nourishment?

If sometimes, in the hope of exciting more attention from this dissipated set, she ventured to drop a mournful hint, that she was a novice to this hard kind of life; the warm compassion that seemed rapidly kindled, raised expectations of immediate assistance; but the emotion, though good, took a direction that made it useless; it merely played about in exclamations of pity; then blazed into curiosity, vented itself in questions, — and evaporated.

She soon, therefore, ceased all attempt to obtain regard through personal representations; feeling yet more mortified to be left in passages, or recommended to domestics, after avowing that her lowly state was the effect of misfortune; than while she permitted it to be presumed, that she had nothing to brook but what she had been born and bred to bear.

Some, indeed, while leaving their own just debts unpaid and unnoticed, would have collected, from their friends, a few

straggling half-crowns; but when Juliet, declining such aid, modestly solicited her right, they captiously disputed a bill which had been charged by the strictest necessity; or offered half what they would have dared propose to any ordinary and hired day-jobber. And whatever admiration they bestowed upon the taste and execution of work prepared for others, all that she finished for themselves, was received with that wary precursor of under-valuing its price, contempt; and looked over with fault-finding eyes, and unmeaning criticism.

Yet, if the following day, or even the following hour, some sudden invitation to a brilliant assembly, made any of these ladies require her services, they would give their orders with caressing solicitations for speed; rush familiarly into her room, three or four times in a day, to see how she went on; supplicate her to touch nothing for any other human being; load her with professions of regard; confound her with hurrying entreaties;

shake her by the hand; tap her on the shoulder; call her the best of souls; assure her of their eternal gratitude; and torment her out of any time for sleep or food: — yet, the occasion past, and the work seen and worn, it was thought of no more! Her pains and exertions, their promises and fondness, sunk into the same oblivion; and the commonest and most inadequate pay was murmured at, if not contested.

Now and then, however, she was surprised by sudden starts of kindness, and hasty enquiries, eagerly made, though scarcely demanding any answer, into her situation and affairs; followed by drawing her, with an air of confidence, into a dressing-room or closet: — but there, when prepared for some mark of favour or esteem, she was only asked, in a mysterious whisper, whether she could procure any cheap foreign lace, or French gloves? or whether she could get over from France, any particularly delicate paste for the hands.

To ladies and to behaviour of this cast, there were, however, exceptions; especially amongst the residents of the place and it's neighbourhood, who were not there, like the visitors, for dissipation or irregular extravagance, that, alternately, causes money to be loosely squandered, and meanly held back. But this better sort was rare, and sufficed not to supply employment to Juliet for her maintenance, though the most parsimonious. Nor were there any amongst them that had the leisure, or the discernment, to discover, that her mind both required and merited succour as much as her circumstances.

Yet there was the seat of what she had most to endure, and found hardest to sustain. Her short, but precious junction with her Gabriella, gave poignancy to every latent regret, and added disgust to her solitary toil. Thoughts uncommunicated, ideas unexchanged, fears unrevealed, and sorrows unparticipated, infused a heaviness into her ex-

istence, that not all her activity in business could conquer; while slackness of pay, by rendering the result of her labours distant and precarious, robbed her industry of cheerfulness, and her exertions of hope. With an ardent love of elegant social intercourse, she was doomed to pass her lonely days in a room that no sound of kindness ever cheered; with enthusiastic admiration of the beauties of Nature, she was denied all prospect, but of the coarse red tilings of opposite attics: with an innate taste for the fine arts, she was forced to exist as completely out of their view or knowledge, as if she had been an inhabitant of some uncivilized country: and fellow-feeling, that most powerful master of philanthropy! now taught her to pity the lamentations of seclusion from the world, that she had hitherto often contemned as weak and frivolous; since now, though with time always occupied, and a mind fully stored, she had the bitter self-experience of the weight of

solitude without books, and of the gloom of retirement without a friend.

During this period, the only notice that she attracted, was that of a gouty old gentleman, whom she frequently met upon the stairs, when forced to mount or descend them in pursuit of her fair heedless creditors. She soon found, by the manner in which he entered, or quitted, at pleasure, the apartment that she had recently given up, that he was her successor. He was evidently struck by her beauty, and, upon their first meeting, looked earnestly after her till she was out of sight; and then, descended into the shop, to enquire who she was of Miss Matson. Miss Matson, always perplexed what to think of her, gave so indefinite, yet so extraordinary an account, that he eagerly awaited an opportunity of seeing her again. Added examination was less calculated to diminish curiosity, than to change it into pleasure and interest; and soon, during whole hours together, he perse-

veringly watched, upon the landing-places, for the moments of her going out, or coming back to the house; that, while smiling and bowing to her as she passed, he might obtain yet another, and another view of so singular and so lovely an Incognita.

As he annexed no fixed idea himself to this assiduity, he impressed none upon Juliet; who, though she could not but observe it, had a mind too much occupied within, for that mental listlessness that applies for thoughts, conjectures, or adventures from without.

Soon, however, becoming anxious to behold her nearer, and, soon after, to behold her longer, he contrived to place himself so as somewhat to obstruct, though not positively to impede, her passage. The modest courtesy, which she gave to his age, when, upon her approach, he made way for her, he pleased himself by attributing to his palpable admiration; and his bow, which had always been polite, became obsequious;

and his smile, which had always spoken pleasure, displayed enchantment.

Still, however, there was nothing to alarm, and little to engage the attention of Juliet; for though ostentatiously gallant, he was scrupulously decorous. His manners and deportment were old-fashioned, but graceful and gentleman-like; and his eyes, though they had lost their brilliancy, were still quick, scrutinizing, and, where not softened by female attractions, severe.

One day, upon her return from a fruitless expedition, as fearfully, while ascending the stairs, she opened a paper that had just been delivered to her in the shop, her deeply absorbed and perplexed air, and the sigh with which she looked at its contents, induced him, with heightened interest, to attempt following her, that he might make some enquiry into her situation. He had discerned, as she passed, that what she held was a bill; he could not doubt her poverty from her change of apartment;

and he wished to offer her some assistance: but finding that he had no chance of overtaking her, before she reached her chamber, he gently called, "Young lady!" and begged that she would stop.

With that alacrity of youthful purity, which is ever disposed to consider age and virtue as one, she not only complied, but, seeing the difficulty with which he mounted the stairs, respected his infirmities, and descended herself to meet him, and hear his business.

To a younger man, or to one less experienced, or less sagacious, this action might have appeared the effect of forwardness, of ignorance, or of levity; but to a man of the world, hackneyed in it's ways, and penetrating into the motives by which it is ordinarily influenced, it seemed the result of innocence without suspicion; yet of an innocence to which her air and manner gave a dignity that destroyed, in its birth, all interpretation to her disadvantage. His purse, therefore, which already he held

in his hand, he felt must be offered with more delicacy than he had at first supposed to be necessary; and, though he was by no means a man apt to be embarrassed, he hesitated, for a moment, how to address a forlorn young stranger.

That moment, however, sufficed to determine him upon making an apology, with the most marked respect, for the liberty which he had taken in claiming her attention. The look with which she listened rewarded his judgment: it expressed the gratitude of feelings to which politeness was a pleasure; but not a novelty.

"I think—I understand, Ma'am," he then said, "you are the lady who inhabited the apartment to which, most unworthily, I have succeeded?"

Juliet bowed.

"I am truly concerned, Ma'am, at a mistake so preposterous in our destinies, so diametrically in opposition to our merits, as that which immures so much beauty and grace, which every one must

wish to behold, in the attics; while so worn-out, and good-for-nothing an old fellow as I am, from whom every body must wish to turn their eyes, is perched, full in front, and precisely on the very spot so every way your superiour due. Whatever wicked Elf has done this deed, I confess myself heartily ashamed of my share in its operation; and humbly ready, should any better genius come amongst us, with a view to putting things into their proper places, to agree, either that you should be lodged, in the face of day, in the drawing-room, and I be jammed, out of sight, in the garret; or — that you should become gouty and decrepit, and I grow suddenly young and beautiful."

Juliet could not but smile, yet waited some explanation without speaking.

Charmed with the smile, which his own rigid features immediately caught, "I have so frequently," he continued, "pondered and ruminated upon the good which those little aerial beings I

speak of might do; and the wrongs which they might redress; were they permitted to visit us, now and then, as we read of their doing in days of yore; that, sometimes, I dream while wide awake, and fancy I see them; and feel myself at the mercy of their antic corrections; or receive courteous presents, or wholesome advice. Just this moment, as you were passing, methought one of them appeared to me!"

Juliet, surprised, involuntarily looked round.

"And it said to me, 'Whence happens it, my worthy antique, that you grow as covetous as you are rich? Bear, for your pains, the punishment due to a miser, of receiving money that you must not hoard; and of presenting, with your own avaricious hand, this purse to the fair young creature whose dwelling you have usurped; yet who resides nearest to those she most resembles, the gods and goddesses.'"

With these words, and a low bow, he

would have put his purse into her hand; but upon her starting back, it dropt at her feet.

Surprized, yet touched, as well as amused, by a turn so unexpected to his pleasantry, Juliet, gracefully restoring, though firmly declining his offer, uttered her thanks for the kindness of his intentions, with a sweetness so unsuspicious of evil, that they separated with as strong an impression of wonder upon his part, as, upon her's, of gratitude.

Anxious to relieve the perplexity thus excited, and to settle his opinion, he continued to watch, but could not again address her; for aware, now, of his purpose, she fled down, or darted up stairs, with a swiftness that defied pursuit; yet with a passing courtesy, that marked respectful remembrance.

Thus, in a life of solitary hardship, with no intermission but for mortifying disappointment, passed nearly three weeks, when Juliet found, with affright and astonishment, that all orders for

work seemed at an end. It was no longer the season for Brighthelmstone, whose visitors were only accidental stragglers, that, here to-day, and gone to-morrow, had neither care nor leisure but for rambling and amusement. The residents, though by no means inconsiderable, were soon served; for Elinor was removed to Lewes, and her influence was lost with her presence. Some new measure, therefore, for procuring employment, became necessary; and Juliet, once more, was reduced to make application to Miss Matson.

In passing, therefore, one morning, through the shop, with some work prepared for carrying home, she stopt to open upon the subject; but the appearance of Miss Bydel at the door, induced her, with an hasty apology, to make an abrupt retreat; that she might avoid an encounter which, with that lady, was always irksome, if not painful, from her unconstrained curiosity; joined to the grossness of her conceptions and remarks.

CHAPTER XLIV.

JULIET, in remounting the stairs, was stopt, by her new acquaintance, before the door of his apartment.

" If you knew," he said, " how despitefully I have been treated, and how miserably black and blue I have been pinched, by the little Imp whose offer you have rejected, sleep would fly your eyes at night, from remorse for your hardness of heart. Its Impship insists upon it, that the fault must all be mine. What! it cries, would you persuade me, that a young creature whose face beams with celestial sweetness, whose voice is the voice of melody, whose eyes have the softness of the Dove's——"

Juliet, though she smiled, would have escaped; but he told her he must be heard.

" Would you persuade me, quoth my

sprite, that such an angelic personage, would rather let my poor despised coin canker and rust in your miserly coffers, than disperse it about in the world, in kind, generous, or useful activity? No, my antique, continues my little elf, you have presented it in some clumsy, hunchy, awkward mode, that has made her deem you an unworthy bearer of fairy gifts; and she flies the downy wings of my gentle succour, from the fear of falling into your rough and uncooth claws."

Juliet, who now, through the ill-closed fingers of his gouty hand, discerned his prepared purse, seriously begged to decline this discussion.

"What malice you must bear me!" he cried. "You are surely in the pay of my evil genius! and I shall be whipt with nettles, or scratched with thorns, all night, in revenge of my failure! And that parcel, too, — which strains the fine fibres of your fair hands, — cast it but down, and millions of my little elves

will struggle to convey it safely to your chamber."

"I doubt not their dexterity," answered Juliet, "nor the benevolence of their fabricator; but I assure you, Sir, I want no help."

"If you will not accept their aerial services, deign, at least, not to refuse mine!"

He endeavoured, now, to take the gown-packet into his own hands; laughingly saying, upon her grave resistance, "Beware, fair nymph, of the dormant sensations which you may awaken, if you should make me suppose you afraid of me! Many a long day is past, alas! and gone, since I could flatter myself with the idea of exciting fear in a young breast!"

Ceasing, however, the attempt, after some courteous apologies, he respectfully let her pass.

But, upon entering her room, she heard something chink as she deposited her parcel upon a table; and, upon ex-

amination, found that he had managed to slip into it, during the contest, a little green purse.

Vexed at this contrivance, and resolved not to lose an instant in returning what no distress could induce her to retain, she immediately descended; but the stair-case was vacant, and the door was closed. Fearful any delay might authorize a presumption of acceptance, she assumed courage to tap at the door.

A scampering, at the same moment, up the stairs, made her instantly regret this measure; and by no means the less, for finding herself recognized, and abruptly accosted by young Gooch, the farmer's son, at the very moment that her gouty admirer had hobbled to answer to her summons.

"Well, see if I a'n't a good marksman!" he cried; "for else, Ma'am, I might have passed you; for they told me, below, you were up there, at the very top of the house. But I'd warrant to pick you out from a hundred,

Ma'am; as neat as my father would one of his stray sheep. But what I come for, Ma'am, is to ask the favour of your company, if it's agreeable to you, to a little junket at our farm."

Then, rubbing his hands with great glee, unregarding the surprised look of Juliet, at such an invitation, or the amused watchfulness of the observant old beau, he went glibly on.

"Father's to give it, Ma'am. You never saw old dad, I believe, Ma'am? The old gentleman's a very good old chap; only he don't like our clubs: for he says they make me speak quite in the new manner; so that the farmers, he says, don't know what I'd be at. He's rather in years, Ma'am, poor man. He don't know much how things go. However, he's a very well meaning old gentleman."

Juliet gravely enquired, to what unknown accident she might attribute an invitation so unexpected?

"Why, Ma'am," answered Gooch,

delighted at the idea of having given her an agreeable surprize, " Why it's the 'Squire, Ma'am, that put it into my head. You know who I mean? our rich cousin, 'Squire Tedman. He's a great friend of yours, I can assure you, Ma'am. He wants you to take a little pleasure sadly. And he's sadly afraid, too, he says, that you'll miss him, now he's gone to town; for he used often, he says, to bring you one odd thing or another. He's got a fine fortune of his own, my cousin the 'Squire. And he's a widower.—And he's taken a vast liking to you, I can tell you, Ma'am;—so who knows . . . . ."

Juliet would have been perfectly unmoved by this ignorant forwardness, but for the presence of a stranger, to whose good opinion, after her experience of his benevolence, she could not be indifferent. With an air, therefore, that marked her little satisfaction at this familiar jocoseness, she declined the invitation; and begged the young man to acquaint

Mr. Tedman, that, though obliged to his intentions, she should feel a yet higher obligation in his forbearance to forward to her, in future, any similar proposals.

"Why, Ma'am," cried young Gooch, astonished, "this i'n't a thing you can get at every day! We shall have all the main farmers of the neighbourhood! for it's given on account of a bargain that we've made, of a nice little slip of land, just by our square hay-field. And I've leave to choose six of the company myself. But they won't be farmers, Ma'am, I can tell you! They'll be young fellows that know better how the world goes. And we shall have your good friend 'Squire Stubbs; for it's he that made our bargain."

Juliet, now, turning from him to the silent, remarking stranger, said, "I am extremely ashamed, Sir, to obtrude thus upon your time, but the person for whom you so generously destined this donation commissions me to return it,

with many thanks, and an assurance that it is not at all wanted."

She held out her hand with the purse, but, drawing back from receiving it, "Madam," he cried, "I would upon no account offend any one who has the honour of being known to you; but you will not, therefore, I hope, insist that I should quarrel with myself, by taking what does not belong to me?"

While Juliet, now, looked wistfully around, to discover some place where she might drop the purse, unseen by the young man, whose misinterpretations might be injurious, the youth volubly continued his own discourse.

"We shall give a pretty good entertainment in the way of supper, I assure you, Ma'am; for we shall have a goose at top, and a turkey at bottom, and as fine a fat pig as ever you saw in your life in the middle; with as much ale, and mead, and punch, as you can desire to drink. And, as all my sisters are at home, and a brace or so of nice young

lasses of their acquaintance, besides ever so many farmers, and us seven stout young fellows of my club, into the bargain, we intend to kick up a dance. It may keep you out a little late, to be sure, Ma'am, but you shall have our chay-cart to bring you home. You know our chay-cart of old, Ma'am?"

"I, Sir?"

"Why, lauk! have you forgot that, Ma'am? Why it's our chay-cart that brought you to Brighton, from Madam Maple's at Lewes, as good as half a year ago. Don't you remember little Jack, that drove you? and that went for you again the next day, to fetch you back?"

Juliet now found, that this was the carriage procured for her by Harleigh, upon her first arrival at Lewes; and, though chagrined at the air of former, or disguised intimacy, which such an incident might seem to convey to her new friend, she immediately acknowledged recollecting the circumstance.

"Well, I'm only sorry, Ma'am, I did not drive you myself; but I had not the pleasure of your acquaintance then, Ma'am; for 'twas before of our acting together."

The surprise of the listening old gentleman now altered its expression, from earnest curiosity to suppressed pleasantry; and he leant against his door, to take a pinch of snuff, with an air that denoted him to be rather waiting for some expected amusement, than watching, as heretofore, for some interesting explanation.

Juliet, in discerning the passing change in his ideas, became more than ever eager to return the purse; yet more than ever fearful of misconstruction from young Gooch; whom she now, with encreased dissatisfaction, begged to lose no time in acquainting Mr. Tedman, that business only ever took her from home.

"Why, that's but moping for you, neither, Ma'am," he answered, in a tone of pity. "You'd have double the spirits

if you'd go a little abroad; for staying within doors gives one but a hippish turn. It will go nigh to make you grow quite melancholick, Ma'am."

Hopeless to get rid either of him or of the purse, Juliet, now, was moving up stairs, when the voice of Miss Bydel called out from the passage, "Why, Mr. Gooch, have you forgot I told you to send Mrs. Ellis to me?"

"That I had clean!" he answered. "I ask your pardon, I'm sure, Ma'am.—Why, Ma'am, Miss Bydel told me to tell you, when I said I was coming up to ask you to our junket, that she wanted to say a word or two to you, down in the shop, upon business."

Juliet would have descended; but Miss Bydel, desiring her to wait, mounted herself, saying, "I have a mind to see your little new room:" stopping, however, when she came to the landing-place, which was square and large, "Well-a-day!" she exclaimed:" Sir Jaspar Herrington!—who'd have thought

of seeing you, standing so quietly at your door? Why I did not know you could stand at all! Why how is your gout, my good Sir? And how do you like your new lodgings? I heard of your being here from Miss Matson. But pray, Mrs. Ellis, what has kept you both, you and young Mr. Gooch, in such close conference with Sir Jaspar? I can't think what you've been talking of so long. Pray how did you come to be so intimate together? I should like to know that."

Sir Jaspar courteously invited Miss Bydel to enter his apartment; but that lady, not aware that nothing is less delicate than professions of delicacy; which degrade a just perception, and strict practice of propriety, into a display of conscious caution, or a suspicion of evil interpretation; almost angrily answered, that she could not for the world do such a thing, for it would set every body a talking: "for, as I'm not married, Sir Jaspar, you know, and as you're a single

gentleman, too, it might make Miss Matson and her young ladies think I don't know what. For, when once people's tongues are set a-going, it's soon too late to stop them. Besides, every body's always so prodigious curious to dive into other people's affairs, that one can't well be too prudent."

Sir Jaspar, with an arched brow, of which she was far from comprehending the meaning, said that he acquiesced in her better judgment; but, as she had announced that she came to speak with this young lady upon business, he enquired, whether there would be any incongruity in putting a couple of chairs upon the landing-place.

"Well," she cried, "that's a bright thought, I declare, Sir Jaspar! for it will save me the trouble of groping up stairs;" and then, seizing the opportunity to peep into his room, she broke forth into warm exclamations of pleasure, at the many nice and new things with which it had been furnished, since it had been vacated by Mrs. Ellis.

A look, highly commiserating, shewed him shocked by these observations; and the air, patiently calm, with which they were heard by Juliet, augmented his interest, as well as wonder, in her story and situation.

He ordered his valet to fetch an arm-chair for Miss Bydel; while, evidently meant for Juliet, he began to drag another forward himself.

"Bless me, Sir Jaspar!" cried Miss Bydel, looking, a little affronted, towards Juliet, "have you no common chairs?"

"Yes," he answered, still labouring on, "for common purposes!"

"This civility was not lost upon Juliet, who declining, though thankful for his attention, darted forward, to take, for herself, a seat of less dignity; hastily, as she passed, dropping the purse upon a table.

A glance at Sir Jaspar sufficed to assure her, that this action had not escaped his notice; and though his look spoke disappointment, it shewed him

sensible of the propriety of avoiding any contest.

Relieved, from this burthen, she now cheerfully waited to hear the orders of Miss Bydel: young Gooch waited to hear them also; seated, cross-legged, upon the balustrade; though Sir Jaspar sent his valet away, and retired, scrupulously, himself, to the further end of his apartment.

Miss Bydel, as little struck with the ill breeding of the young farmer, as with the good manners of the baronet, forgot her business, from recollecting that Mr. Scope was waiting for her in the shop. "For happening," said she, "to pass by, and see me, through the glass-door, he just stept in, on purpose to have a little chat."

"O ho, what, is 'Squire Scope here?" cried young Gooch; and, rapidly sliding down the banisters, seized upon the unwilling and precise Mr. Scope, whom he dragged up to the landing-place.

"Well, this is droll enough!" cried Miss Bydel, palpably enchanted, though trying to look displeased; "only I hope you have not told Mr. Scope 'twas I that sent you for him, Mr. Gooch? for, I assure you, Mr. Scope, I would not do such a thing for the world. I should think it quite improper. Besides, what will Miss Matson and the young milliners say? Who knows but you may have set them a prating, Mr. Gooch? It's no joke, I can assure you, doing things of this sort."

"I'm sure, Ma'am," said Gooch, "I thought you wanted to see the 'Squire; for I did not do it in the least to make game."

"There can be no doubt, Madam," said Mr. Scope, somewhat offended, "that all descriptions of sport are not, at all times, advisable. For, in small societies, as in great states, if I may be permitted to compare little things with great ones, danger often lurks unseen, and mischief breaks out from trifles. In

like manner, for example, if one of those young milliners, misinterpreting my innocence, in obeying the supposed commands of the good Miss Bydel, should take the liberty to laugh at my expence, what, you might ask, could it signify that a young girl should laugh? Young persons, especially of the female gender, being naturally given to laughter, at very small provocatives; not to say sometimes without any whatsoever. Whereupon, persons of an ordinary judgment, may conclude such an action, by which I mean laughing, to be of no consequence.—"

"But I think it very rude!" cried Miss Bydel, extremely nettled.

"Please to hear me, Madam!" said Mr. Scope. "Persons, I say, of deeper knowledge in the maxims and manners of the moral world, would look forward with watchfulness, on such an occasion, to its future effects; for one laugh breeds another, and another breeds another; for nothing is so catching as

laughing; I mean among the vulgar; in which class I would be understood to include the main mass of a great nation. What, I ask, ensues?—"

"O, as to that, Mr. Scope," cried Miss Bydel, rather impatiently, "I assure you if I knew any body that took such a liberty as to laugh at me, I should let them know my thoughts of such airs without much ceremony!"

"My very good lady," said Mr. Scope, formally bowing, "if I may request such a favour, I beg you to be silent. The laugh, I observe, caught thus, from one to another, soon spreads abroad; and then, the more aged, or better informed, may be led to enquire into its origin: and the result of such investigation must needs be, that the worthy Miss Bydel, having sent her commands to her humble servant, Mr. Scope, to follow her up stairs—"

"But if they said that," cried Miss Bydel, looking very red, "it would be as great a fib as ever was told, for I did

not send my commands, nor think of such a thing. It was Mr. Gooch's own doing, only for his own nonsense. And I am curious to know, Mr. Gooch, whether any body ever put such thoughts into your head? Pray did you ever hear any body talk, Mr. Gooch? For, if you have, I should be glad to know what they said."

Mr. Scope, waving his hand to demand attention, again begged leave to remark, that he had not finished what he purposed to advance.

"My argument, Madam," he resumed, "is a short, but, I hope, a clear one, for 'tis deduced from general principles and analogy; though, upon a merely cursory view, it may appear somewhat abstruse. But what I mean, in two words, is, that the laugh raised by Mr. Gooch, and those young milliners; taking it for granted that they laughed; which, indeed, I rather think I heard them do; may, in itself, perhaps, as only announcing incapacity, not be con-

demnable; but when it turns out that it promulgates false reports, and makes two worthy persons, if I may take the liberty to name myself with the excellent Miss Bydel, appear to be fit subjects for ridicule; then, indeed, the laugh is no longer innocent; and ought, in strict justice, to be punished, as seriously as any other mode of propagating false rumours."

Miss Bydel, after protesting that Mr. Scope talked so prodigiously sensible, that she was never tired of hearing him, for all his speeches were so long; abruptly told Juliet, that she had called to let her know, that she should be glad to be paid, out of hand, the money which she had advanced for the harp.

Sir Jaspar, who, during the harangue of Mr. Scope, which was uttered in too loud and important a manner, to leave any doubt of it's being intended for general hearing; had drawn his chair to join the party, listened to this demand with peculiar attention; and was struck

with the evident distress which it caused to Juliet; who fearfully besought a little longer law, to collect the debts of others, that she might be able to discharge her own.

Young Gooch, coming behind her, said, in a half whisper, " If you'll tell me how much it is you owe, Ma'am, I'll help you out in a trice; for I can have what credit I will in my father's name; and he'll never know but what 'twas for some frolic of my own; for I don't make much of a confidant of the old gentleman."

The most icy refusal was insufficient to get rid of this offer, or offerer; who assured her that, if the worst came to the worst, and his father, by ill luck, should find them out, he would not make a fuss for above a day or two; " because," he continued, " he has only me, as one may say, for the rest are nothing but girls; so he can't well help himself. He gave me my swing too long from the first, to bind me down at

this time of day. Besides, he likes to have me a little in the fashion, I know, though he won't own it; for he is a very good sort of an old gentleman, at bottom."

Sir Jaspar sought to discover, whether the colour which heightened the cheeks of Juliet at this proposal, which now ceased to be delivered in a whisper, was owing to confusion at its publicity, or to disdain at the idea of conspiring either at deceiving or braving the young man's father; while Miss Bydel, whose plump curiosity saved her from all species of speculative trouble, bluntly said, "Why should you hesitate at such an offer, my dear? I'm sure I don't see how you can do better than accept it. Mr. Gooch is a very worthy young man, and so are all his family. I'm sure I only wish he'd take to you more solidly, and make a match of it. That would put an end to your troubles at once; and I should get my money out of hand."

This was an opportunity not to be

passed over by the argumentative but unerring Mr. Scope, for trite observations, self-evident truths, and hackneyed calculations, upon the mingled dangers and advantages of matrimony, "which, when weighed," said he, "in equal scales, and abstractedly considered, are of so puzzling a nature, that the wise and wary, fearing to risk them, remain single; but which, when looked upon in a more cursory way, or only lightly balanced, preponderate so much in favour of the state, that the great mass of the nation, having but small means of reflection, or forethought, ordinarily prefer matrimony. If, therefore, young Mr. Gooch should think proper to espouse this young person, there would be nothing in it very surprising; nevertheless, in summing up the expences of wedlock, and a growing family, it might seem, that to begin the married state with debts already contracted, on the female side, would appear but a shallow mark of prudence on the male, where

the cares of that state reasonably devolve; he being naturally supposed to have the most sense."

"O, as to that, Mr. Scope," cried Miss Bydel, "if Mr. Gooch should take a liking to this young person, she has money enough to pay her debts, I can assure you: I should not have asked her for it else; but the thing is, she don't like to part with it."

Juliet solemnly protested, that the severest necessity could alone have brought her into the pecuniary difficulties under which she laboured; the money to which Miss Bydel alluded being merely a deposit which she held in her hands, and for which she was accountable.

"Well, that's droll enough," said Miss Bydel, "that a young person, not worth a penny in the world, should have the care of other people's money! I should like to know what sort of persons they must be, that can think of making such a person their steward!"

Young Gooch said that it would not

be his father, for one, who would do it; and Mr. Scope was preparing an elaborate dissertation upon the nature of confidence, with regard to money-matters, in a great state: when Miss Bydel, charmed to have pronounced a sentence which seemed to accord with every one's opinion, ostentatiously added, "I should like, I say, Mrs. Ellis, to know what sort of person it could be, that would trust a person with one's cash, without enquiring into their circumstances? for though, upon hearing that a person has got nothing, one may give 'em something, one must be no better than a fool to make them one's banker."

Juliet, who could not enter into any explanation, stammered, coloured, and from the horrour of seeing that she was suspected, wore an air of seeming apprehensive of detection.

A short pause ensued, during which, every one fixed his eyes upon her face, save Sir Jaspar; who seemed studying a portrait upon his snuff-box.

Her immediate wish, in this disturbance, was to clear herself from so terrible an aspersion, by paying Miss Bydel, as she had paid her other creditors, from the store of Harleigh; but her wishes, tamed now by misfortune and disappointment, were too submissively under the controul of fear and discretion, to suffer her to act from their first dictates: and a moment's reflection pointed out, that, joined to the impropriety of such a measure with respect to Harleigh himself, it would be liable, more than any other, to give her the air of an impostor, who possessed money that she could either employ, or disclaim all title to, at her pleasure. Calling, therefore, for composure from conscious integrity, she made known her project of applying once more to Miss Matson, for work; and earnestly supplicated for the influence of Miss Bydel, that this second application might not, also, be vain.

The eyes of the atttentive Sir Jaspar, as he raised them from his snuff-box, now spoke respect mingled with pity.

"As to recommending you to Miss Matson, Mrs. Ellis," answered Miss Bydel, "it's out of all reason to demand such a thing, when I can't tell who you are myself; and only know that you have got money in your hands nobody knows how, nor what for."

An implication such as this, nearly overpowered the fortitude of Juliet; and, relinquishing all further effort, she rose, and, silently, almost gloomily, began ascending the stairs. Sir Jaspar caught the expression of her despair by a glance; and, in a tone of remonstrance, said to Miss Bydel, "In your debt, good Miss Bydel? Have you forgotten, then, that the young lady has paid you?"

"Paid me? good Me! Sir Jaspar," cried Miss Bydel, staring; "how can you say such a thing? Do you think I'd cheat the young woman?"

"I think it so little," answered he, calmly, "that I venture to remind you, thus publicly, of the circumstance; in full persuasion that I shall merit your gratitude, by aiding your memory."

"Good Me! Sir Jaspar, why I never heard such a thing in my life! Paid me? When? Why it can't be without my knowing it?"

"Certainly not; I beg you, therefore, to recollect yourself."

The stare of Miss Bydel was now caught by Mr. Scope; and her "Good Me!" was echoed by young Gooch; while the surprised Juliet, turning back, said, "Pardon me, Sir! I have never been so happy as to be able to discharge the debt. It remains in full force."

"Over you, too, then," cried Sir Jaspar, with quickness, "have I the advantage in memory? Have you forgotten that you delivered, to Miss Bydel, the full sum, not twenty minutes since?"

Miss Bydel now, reddening with anger, cried, "Sir Jaspar, I have long enough heard of your ill nature; but I never suspected your crossness would take such a turn against a person as this, to make people believe I demand what is not my own!"

Juliet again solemnly acknowledged the debt; and Mr. Scope opened an harangue upon the merits of exactitude between debtor and creditor, and the usefulness of settling no accounts, without, what were the only legal witnesses to obviate financial controversy, receipts in full; when Sir Jaspar, disregarding, alike, his rhetoric or Miss Bydel's choler, quietly patting his snuff-box, said, that it was possible that Miss Bydel had, inadvertently, put the sum into her work-bag, and forgotten that it had been refunded.

Exulting that means, now, were open for vindication and redress, Miss Bydel eagerly untied the strings of her work-bag; though Juliet entreated that she would spare herself the useless trouble. But Sir Jaspar protested, with great gravity, that his own honour was now as deeply engaged to prove an affirmative, as that of Miss Bydel to prove a negative: holding, however, her hand, he said that he could not be satisfied, unless the complete contents of the work-bag

were openly and fairly emptied upon a table, in sight of the whole party.

Miss Bydel, though extremely affronted, consented to this proposal; which would clear her, she said, of so false a slander. A table was then brought upon the landing-place; as she still stiffly refused risking her reputation, by entering the apartment of a single gentleman; though he might not, as she observed, be one of the youngest.

Sir Jaspar demanded the precise amount of the sum owed. A guinea and a half.

He then fetched a curious little japan basket from his chamber, into which he desired that Miss Bydel would put her work-bag; though he would not suffer her to empty it, till, with various formalities, he had himself placed it in the middle of the table; around which he made every one draw a chair.

Miss Bydel now triumphantly turned her work-bag inside out; but what was her consternation, what the shock of

Mr. Scope, and how loud the shout of young Gooch, to see, from a small open green purse, fall a guinea and a half!

Miss Bydel, utterly confounded, remained speechless; but Juliet, through whose sadness Sir Jaspar saw a smile force its way, that rendered her beauty dazzling, recollecting the purse, blushed, and would have relieved Miss Bydel, by confessing that she knew to whom it belonged; had she not been withheld by the fear of the strange appearance which so sudden a seeming intimacy with the Baronet might wear.

Sir Jaspar, again patting his snuff-box, composedly said, "I was persuaded Miss Bydel would find that her debt had been discharged."

Miss Bydel remained stupified; while Mr. Scope, with a look concerned, and even abashed, condolingly began an harangue upon the frail tenure of the faculty of human memory.

Miss Bydel, at length, recovering her

speech, exclaimed, "Well, here's the money, that's certain! but which way it has got into my work-bag, without my ever seeing or touching it, I can't pretend to say: but if Mrs. Ellis has done it to play me a trick —"

Juliet disavowed all share in the transaction.

"Then it's some joke of Sir Jaspar's! for I know he dearly loves to mortify; so I suppose he has given me false coin, or something that won't go, just to make me look like a fool."

"The money, I have the honour to assure you, is not mine," was all that, very tranquilly, Sir Jaspar replied: while Mr. Scope, after a careful examination of each piece, declared each to be good gold, and full weight.

Sundry "Good me's!" and other expressions of surprise, though all of a pleasurable sort, now broke forth from Miss Bydel, finishing with, "However, if nobody will own the money, as the debt is fairly my due, I don't see why I

may not take it; though as to the purse, I won't touch it, because as that's a thing I have not lent to any body, I've no right to it."

Juliet here warmly interfered. The purse, she said, and the money belonged to the same proprietor; and, as neither of them were her's, both ought to be regarded as equally inadmissible for the payment of a debt which she alone had contracted. This disinterested sincerity made even Mr. Scope turn to her with an air of profound, though surprised respect; while Sir Jaspar fixed his eyes upon her face with encreased and the most lively wonder; young Gooch stared, not perfectly understanding her; but Miss Bydel, rolling up the purse, which she put back into the basket, said, "Well, if the money is not yours, Mrs. Ellis, my dear, it can be nobody's but Sir Jaspar's; and if he has a mind to pay your debt for you, I don't see why I should hinder him, when 'twould be so much to my disadvantage. He's

rich enough, I assure you; for what has an old bachelor to do with his money? So I'll take my due, be it which way it will." And, unmoved by all that Juliet could urge, she put the guinea and the half-guinea carefully into her pocket.

Juliet declared, that a debt which she had not herself discharged, she should always consider as unpaid, though her creditor might be changed.

Confused then, ashamed, perplexed, —yet unavoidably pleased, she mounted to her chamber.

CHAPTER XLV.

WITH whatever shame, whatever chagrin, Juliet saw herself again involved in a pecuniary obligation, with a stranger, and a gentleman, a support so efficacious, at a moment of such alarm, was sensibly and gratefully felt. Yet she was not less anxious to cancel a favour which still was unfitting to be received. She watched, therefore, for the departure of Miss Bydel, and the restoration of stillness to the stair-case, to descend, once more, in prosecution of her scheme with Miss Matson.

The anxious fear of rejection, and dread of rudeness, with which she then renewed her solicitation, soon happily subsided, from a readiness to listen, and a civility of manner, as welcome as they were unexpected, in her hostess; by whom she was engaged, without diffi-

culty, to enter upon her new business the following morning.

Thus, and with cruel regret, concluded her fruitless effort to attain a self-dependence which, however subject to toil, might be free, at least, from controul. Every species of business, however narrow its cast, however limited its wants, however mean its materials; required, she now found, some capital to answer to its immediate calls, and some steady credit for encountering the unforeseen accidents, and unavoidable risks, to which all human undertakings, whether great or insignificant, are liable.

With this conviction upon her mind, she strove to bear the disappointment without murmuring; hoping to gain in security all that she lost in liberty. Little reason, indeed, had she for regretting what she gave up: she had been worn by solitary toil, and heavy rumination; by labour without interest, and loneliness without leisure.

Nevertheless, the beginning of her

new career promised little amelioration from the change. She was summoned early to the shop to take her work; but, when she begged leave to return with it to her chamber, she was stared at as if she had made a demand the most preposterous, and told that, if she meant to enter into business, she must be at hand to receive directions, and to learn how it should be done.

To enter into business was far from the intention of Juliet; but the fear of dismission, should she proclaim how transitory were her views, silenced her into acquiescence; and she seated herself behind a distant counter.

And here, perforce, she was initiated into a new scene of life, that of the humours of a milliner's shop. She found herself in a whirl of hurry, bustle, loquacity, and interruptions. Customers pressed upon customers; goods were taken down merely to be put up again; cheapened but to be rejected; admired but to be looked at, and left; and only

bought when, to all appearance, they were undervalued and despised.

It was here that she saw, in its unmasked futility, the selfishness of personal vanity. The good of a nation, the interest of society, the welfare of a family, could with difficulty have appeared of higher importance than the choice of a ribbon, or the set of a cap; and scarcely any calamity under heaven could excite looks of deeper horrour or despair, than any mistake committed in the arrangement of a feather or a flower. Every feature underwent a change, from chagrin and fretfulness, if any ornament, made by order, proved, upon trial, to be unbecoming; while the whole complexion glowed with the exquisite joy of triumph, if something new, devised for a superiour in the world of fashion, could be privately seized as a model by an inferiour.

The ladies whose practice it was to frequent the shop, thought the time and trouble of its mistress, and her assistants,

amply paid by the honour of their presence; and though they tried on hats and caps, till they put them out of shape; examined and tossed about the choicest goods, till they were so injured that they could be sold only at half price; ordered sundry articles, which, when finished, they returned, because they had changed their minds; or discovered that they did not want them; still their consciences were at ease, their honour was self-acquitted, and their generosity was self-applauded, if, after two or three hours of lounging, rummaging, fault-finding and chaffering, they purchased a yard or two of ribbon, or a few skanes of netting silk.

The most callous disregard to all representations of the dearness of materials, or of the just price of labour, was accompanied by the most facile acquiescence even in demands that were exorbitant, if they were adroitly preceded by, "Lady * * *, or the Duchess of * * *, gave that sum for just such another cap, hat, &c., this very morning."

Here, too, as in many other situations into which accident had led, or distress had driven Juliet, she saw, with commiseration and shame for her fellow-creatures, the total absence of feeling and of equity, in the dissipated and idle, for the indigent and laborious. The goods which demanded most work, most ingenuity, and most hands, were last paid, because heaviest of expence; though, for that very reason, the many employed, and the charge of materials, made their payment the first required. Oh that the good Mr. Giles Arbe, thought Juliet, could arraign, in his simple but impressive style, the ladies who exhibit themselves with unpaid plumes, at assemblies and operas; and enquire whether they can flatter themselves, that to adorn them alone is sufficient to recompense those who work for, without seeing them; who ornament without knowing them; and who must necessarily, if unrequited, starve in rendering them more brilliant!

Upon further observation, nevertheless, her compassion for the milliner and the work-women somewhat diminished; for she found that their notions of probity were as lax as those of their customers were of justice; and saw that their own rudeness to those who had neither rank nor fortune, kept pace with the haughtiness which they were forced to support, from those by whom both were possessed. Every advantage was taken of inexperience and simplicity; every article was charged, not according to its value, but to the skill or ignorance of the purchaser; old goods were sold as if new; cheap goods as if dear; and ancient, or vulgar ornaments, were presented to the unpractised chafferer, as the very pink of the mode.

The rich and grand, who were capricious, difficult, and long in their examinations, because their time was their own; or rather, because it hung upon their hands; and whose utmost exertion, and sole practice of exercise consisted

in strolling from a sofa to a carriage, were instantly, and with fulsome adulation, attended; while the meaner, or economical, whose time had its essential appropriations, and was therefore precious, were obliged to wait patiently for being served, till no coach was at the door, and every fine lady had sauntered away. And even then, they were scarcely heard when they spoke; scarcely shewn what they demanded; and scarcely thanked for what they purchased.

In viewing conflicts such as these, between selfish vanity and cringing cunning, it soon became difficult to decide, which was least congenial to the upright mind and pure morality of Juliet, the insolent, vain, unfeeling buyer, or the subtle, plausible, overreaching seller.

The companions of Juliet in this business, though devoted, of course, to its manual operations, left all its cares to its mistress. Their own wishes and hopes were caught by other objects.

The town was filled with officers, whose military occupations were brief, whose acquaintances were few, and who could not, all day long, ride, or pursue the sports of the field. These gentlemen, for their idle moments, chose to deem all the unprotected young women whom they thought worth observance, their natural prey. And though, from race to race, and from time immemorial, the young female shop-keeper had been warned of the danger, the folly, and the fate of her predecessors; in listening to the itinerant admirer, who, here to-day and gone to-morrow, marches his adorations, from town to town with as much facility, and as little regret, as his regiment; still every new votary to the counter and the modes, was ready to go over the same ground that had been trodden before; with the fond persuasion of proving an exception to those who had ended in misery and disgrace, by finishing, herself, with marriage and promotion. Their minds, therefore, were engaged in airy pro-

jects; and their leisure, where they could elude the vigilance of Miss Matson, was devoted to clandestine coquetry, tittering whispers, and secret frolics.

"These," said Juliet, in a letter to Gabriella, "are now my destined associates! Ah, heaven! can these — can such as these, — setting aside pride, prejudice, propriety, or whatever word we use for the distinctions of society, — can these — can such as these, suffice as companions to her whose grateful heart has been honoured with the friendship of Gabriella? O hours of refined felicity past and gone, how severe is your contrast with those of heaviness and distaste now endured!"

The inexperience of Juliet in business, impeded not her acquiring almost immediate excellence in the millinery art, for which she was equally fitted by native taste, and by her remembrance of what she had seen abroad. The first time, therefore, that she was employed to

arrange some ornaments, she adjusted them with an elegance so striking, that Miss Matson, with much parade, exhibited them to her best lady-customers, as a specimen of the very last new fashion, just brought her over by one of her young ladies from Paris.

In a town that subsists by the search of health for the sick, and of amusement for the idle, the smallest new circumstance is of sufficient weight to be related and canvassed; for there is ever most to say where there is least to do. The phrase, therefore, that went forth from Miss Matson, That one of her young ladies was just come from France, was soon spread through the neighbourhood; with the addition that the same person had brought over specimens of all the French *costume*.

Such a report could not fail to allure staring customers to the shop, where the attraction of the youth and beauty of the new work-woman, contrasted with her determined silence to all enquiry, gave

birth to perpetually varying conjectures in her presence, which were followed by the most eccentric assertions where she was the subject of discourse in her absence. All that already had been spread abroad, of her acting, her teaching, her playing the harp, her needle-work, and, more than all, her having excited a suicide; was now in every mouth; and curiosity, baffled in successive attempts to penetrate into the truth, supplied, as usual, every chasm of fact by invention.

This species of commerce, always at hand, and always fertile, proved so highly amusing to the lassitude of the idle, and to the frivolousness of the dissipated, that, in a very few days, the shop of Miss Matson became the general rendezvous of the saunterers, male and female, of Brighthelmstone. The starers were happy to present themselves where there was something to see; the strollers, where there was any where to go; the loungers, where there was any pretence to stay; and the curious where there was any

thing to develop in which they had no concern.

Juliet, at first, ignorant of the usual traffic of the shop, imagined this affluence of customers to be habitual; but she was soon undeceived, by finding herself the object of inquisitive examination; and by overhearing unrestrained inquiries made to Miss Matson, of "Pray, Ma'am, which is your famous French milliner?"

In the midst of these various distastes and discomforts, some interest was raised in the mind of Juliet, for one of her young fellow-work-women. It was not, indeed, that warm interest which is the precursor of friendship; its object had no qualities that could rise to such a height; it was simply a sensation of pity, abetted by a wish of doing good.

Flora Pierson, without either fine features or fine countenance, had strikingly the beauty of youth in a fair complexion, round, plump, rosy cheeks, bright, though unmeaning eyes, and an air of

health, strength, and juvenile good humour, that was diffused copiously through her whole appearance. She was innocent and inoffensive, and, as far as she was able to think, well meaning, and ready to be at every body's command; though incapable to be at any body's service. Yet her simplicity was of that happy sort that never occasions self-distress, from being wholly unaccompanied by any consciousness of deficiency or inferiority. Accustomed to be laughed at almost whenever she spoke, she saw the smile that she raised without emotion; or participated in it without knowing why; and she heard the sneer that followed her simple merriment without displeasure; though sometimes she would a little wonder what it meant.

This young creature, who had but barely passed her sixteenth year, had already attracted the dangerous attention of various officers, from whose several attacks and manœuvres she had hitherto

been rescued by the vigilance of Miss Matson. Each of these anecdotes she eagerly took, or rather made opportunities to communicate to Juliet; waiting for no other encouragement than the absence of Miss Matson, and using no other prelude than "Now I've got something else to tell you!"

Except for some slight mixture of contempt, Juliet heard these tales with perfect indifference; till that ungenial feeling, or rather absence of feeling, was superceded by compassion, upon finding that she was the object, probably the dupe, of a new and unfinished adventure, with which Miss Matson was as yet unacquainted. "Now, Miss Ellis!" she cried, "I'll tell you the drollest part of all, shall I? Well, do you know I've got another admirer that's above all the rest? And yet he i'n't a captain, neither, nor an officer. But he's quite a gentleman of quality, for he's a knight baronight. And he's very pretty, I assure you. As pretty as you, only his

nose is a little shorter, and his mouth is a little bigger. And he has not got quite so much colour; for he is very pale. But he's prettier than I am, I believe. Yet I'm not very homely, people say. I'm sure I don't know. One can't judge one's self. But I believe I'm very well. At least, I am not very brown; I know that, by my looking-glass. I've a pretty good skin of my own."

Neither the giggling derision of her fellow-work-women, nor the total abstinence from enquiry or comment with which Juliet heard these insignificant details, checked the pleasure of Flora in her own prattle; which, whenever she could find some one to address,—for she waited not till any one would listen,—went on, with sleepy good humour, and pretty, but unintelligent smiles, from the moment that she rose, to the moment that she went to rest. But when, in great confidence, and declaring that nobody was in the secret, except just Miss Biddy, and Miss Jenny, and Miss

Polly, and Miss Betsey, she made known who was this last and most striking admirer, the attention of Juliet was roused; it was Sir Lyell Sycamore.

Copiously, and with looks of triumph, Flora related her history with the young Baronet. First of all, she said, he had declared, in ever so many little whispers, that he was in love with her; and next, he had made her ever so many beautiful presents, of ear-rings, necklaces, and trinkets; always sending them by a porter, who pretended that they were just arrived by the Diligence; with a letter to shew to Miss Matson, importing that an uncle of Flora's, who resided in Northumberlandshire, begged her to accept these remembrances. "Though I'm sure I don't know how he found out that I've got an uncle there," she continued, "unless it was by my telling it him, when he asked me what relations I had."

Her gratitude and vanity thus at once excited, Sir Lyell told her that he had

some important intelligence to communicate, which could not be revealed in a short whisper in the shop: he begged her, therefore, to meet him upon the Strand, a little way out of the town, one Sunday afternoon; while Miss Matson might suppose that she was taking her usual recreation with the rest of the young ladies. "So I could not refuse him, you may think," she said, "after being so much obliged to him; and so we walked together by the sea-side, and he was as agreeable as ever; and so was I, too, I believe, if I may judge without flattery. At least, he said I was, over and over; and he's a pretty good judge, I believe, a man of his quality. But I sha'n't tell you what he said to me; for he said I was as fresh as a violet, and as fair as jessamy, and as sweet as a pink, and as rosy as a rose; but one must not over and above believe the gentlemen, mama says, for what they say is but half a compliment. However, what do you think, Miss Ellis? Only

guess! For all his being so polite, do you know, he was upon the point of behaving rude? Only I told him I'd squall out, if he did. But he spoke so pretty when he saw I was vexed, that I could not be very angry with him about it; could I? Besides, men will be rude, naturally, mamma says."

"But does not your mama tell you, also, Miss Pierson, that you must not walk out alone with gentlemen?"

"O dear, yes! She's told me that ever so often. And I told it to Sir Lyell; and I said to him we had better not go. But he said that would kill him, poor gentleman! And he looked as sorrowful as ever you saw; just as if he was going to cry. I'm sure I'm glad he did not, poor gentleman! for if he had, it's ten to one but I should have cried too; unless, out of ill luck, I had happened to fall a laughing; for it's odds which I do, sometimes, when I'm put in a fidget. However, upon seeing his sister, along with some company of his acquaintance,

not far off, he said I had better go back: but he promised me, if I would meet him again the next Sunday, he would have a post-chaise o'purpose for me, because of the pebbles being so hard for my feet; and he'd take me ever so pretty a ride, he said, upon the Downs. But he came the next morning to tell me he was forced, by ill luck, to go to London; but he'd soon be back: and he bid me, ever so often, not to say one word of what had passed to a living creature; for if his sister should get an inkling of his being in love with me, there would be fine work, he said! But he'd bring me ever so many pretty things, he said, from London."

Juliet listened to this history with the deepest indignation against the barbarous libertine, who, with egotism so inhuman, sought to rob, first of innocence, and next, for it would be the inevitable consequence, of all her fair prospects in life, a young creature whose simplicity disabled her from seeing her

danger; whose credulity induced her to agree to whatever was proposed; and whose weakness of intellect rendered it as much a dishonour as a cruelty to make her a dupe.

Whatever could be suggested to awaken the simple maiden to a sense of her perilous situation, was instantly urged; but without any effect. Sir Lyell Sycamore, she answered, had owned that he was in love with her; and it was very hard if she must be ill natured to him in return; especially as, if she behaved agreeably, nobody could tell but he might mean to make her a lady. Where a vision so refulgent, which every speech of Sir Lyell's, couched in ambiguous terms, though adroitly evasive of promise, had been insidiously calculated to present, was sparkling full in sight, how unequal were the efforts of sober truth and reason, to substitute in its place cold, dull, disappointing reality! Juliet soon relinquished the attempt as hopeless. Where ignorance is united

with vanity, advice, or reproof, combat it in vain. She addressed her remonstrances, therefore, to their fellow-workwomen; every one of which, it was evident, was a confident of the dangerous secret. How was it, she demanded, that, aware of the ductility of temper of this poor young creature, they had suffered her to form so alarming a connexion, unknown either to her friends or to Miss Matson?

Pettishly affronted, they answered, that they were not a set of fusty duennas: that if Miss Pierson were ever so young, that did not make them old; that she might as well take care of herself, therefore, as they of themselves. Besides, nobody could tell but Sir Lyell Sycamore meant to marry her; and indeed they none of them doubted that such was his design; because he was politeness itself to all of them round, though he was most particular, to be sure, to Miss Pierson. They could not think, therefore, of making such a gen-

tleman their enemy, any more than of standing in the way of Miss Pierson's good fortune; for, to their certain knowledge, there were more grand matches spoilt by meddling and making, than by any thing else upon earth.

Here again, what were the chances of truth and reason against the semblance, at least the pretence of generosity, which thus covered folly and imprudence? Each aspiring damsel, too, had some similar secret, or correspondent hope of her own; and found it convenient to reject, as treachery, an appeal against a sister work-woman, that might operate as an example for a similar one against herself.

Juliet, therefore, could but determine to watch the weak, if not willing victim, while yet under the same roof; and openly, before she quitted it, to reveal the threatening danger to Miss Matson.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE first Sunday that Juliet passed in this new situation, nearly robbed her of the good will of the whole of the little community to which she belonged. It was the only day in the week in which the young work-women were allowed some hours for recreation; they considered it, therefore, as rightfully dedicated, after the church-service, to amusement with one another; and Juliet, in refusing to join in a custom which they held to be the basis of their freedom and happiness, appeared to them an unsocial and haughty innovator. Yet neither wearying remonstrances, nor persecuting persuasions, could prevail upon her to parade with them upon the Steyne; to stroll with them by the sea-side; to ramble upon the Downs; or to form a party for Shoreham, or Devil's Dyke.

Evil is so relative, that the same chamber, the lonely sadness of which, since her privation of Gabriella, had become nearly insupportable to her, was now, from a new contrast, almost all that she immediately coveted. The bustle, the fatigue, the obtrusion of new faces, the spirit of petty intrigue, and the eternal clang of tongues; which she had to endure in the shop, made quiet, even in its most uninteresting dulness, desirable and consoling.

To approach herself, as nearly as might be in her power, to the loved society which she had lost, she destined this only interval of peace and leisure, to her pen and Gabriella; and such was her employment, when the sound of slow steps, upon the stairs, followed by a gentle tap at her door, at once interrupted and surprised her. Miss Matson and her maids, as well as her work-women, were spending their Sabbath abroad; and a shopman was left to take care of the house. The tap, however, was repeated, and,

obeying its call, Juliet beheld Sir Jaspar Herrington, the gouty old Baronet.

The expression of her countenance immediately demanded explanation, if not apology, as she stepped forward upon the landing-place, to make clear that she should not receive him in her apartment.

His keen eye read her meaning, though, affecting not to perceive it, he pleasantly said, " How? immured in your chamber? and of a gala day?"

The recollection of the essential, however forced obligation, which she owed to him, for her deliverance from the persecution of Miss Bydel, soon dissipated her first impression in his disfavour, and she quietly answered that she went very little abroad: but when she would have enquired into his business, " You can refuse yourself, then," he cried, pretending not to hear her, " the honour—or pleasure, which shall we call it? of sharing in the gaieties of your fair fellow-votaries to the needle?

I suspected you of this self-denial. I had a secret presentiment that you would be insensible to the fluttering joys of your sister spinsters. How did I divine you so well? What is it you have about you that sets one's imagination so to work?"

Juliet replied, that she would not presume to interfere with the business of his penetration, but that, as she was occupied, she must beg to know, at once, his commands.

"Not so hasty! not so hasty!" he cried: "You must shew me some little consideration, if only in excuse for the total want of it which you have caused in those little imps, that beset my slumbers by night, and my reveries by day. They have gotten so much the better of me now, that I am equally at a loss how to sleep or how to wake for them. 'Why don't you find out,' they cry, 'whether this syren likes her new situation? Why don't you discover whether any thing better can be done for her?' And

then, all of one accord, they so pommel and bemaul me, that you would pity me, I give you my word, if you could see the condition into which they put my poor conscience; however little so fair a young creature may be disposed to feel pity, for such a hobbling, gouty old fellow as I am!"

Softened by this benevolent solicitude, Juliet, thankfully, spoke of herself with all the cheerfulness that she could assume; and, encouraged by her lessened reserve, Sir Jaspar, to her unspeakable surprise, said, "There is one point, I own, which I have an extreme desire to know; how long may it be that you have left the stage, and from what latent cause?"

No explanation, however, could be attempted: the attention of Juliet was called into another channel, by the sound of a titter, which led her to perceive Flora Pierson; who, almost convulsed with delight at having surprised them, said that she had heard, from the

shop-man, that Miss Ellis and Sir Jaspar were talking together upon the stairs, and she had stolen up the back way, and crept softly through one of the garrets, on purpose to come upon them unawares. "So now," added she, nodding, "we'll go into my room, if you please, Miss Ellis; for I have got something else to tell you! only you must not stay with me long."

"And not to tell me, too?" cried Sir Jaspar, chucking her under the chin: "How's this, my daffodil? my pink? my lilly? how's this? surely you have not any secrets for me?"

"O yes, I have, Sir Jaspar! because you're a gentleman, you know, Sir Jaspar. And one must not tell every thing to gentlemen, mamma says."

"Mamma says? but you are too much a woman to mind what mamma says, I hope, my rose, my daisy?" cried Sir Jaspar, chucking her again under the chin, while she smiled and courtsied in return.

Juliet would have re-entered her

chamber; but Flora, catching her gown, said, "Why now, Miss Ellis, I bid you come to my room, if you please, Miss Ellis; 'cause then I can show you my presents; as well as tell you something.—Come, will you go? for it's something that's quite a secret, I assure you; for I have not told it to any body yet; not even to our young ladies; for it's but just happened. So you've got my first confidence this time: and you have a right to take that very kind of me, for it's what I've promised, upon my word and honour, and as true as true can be, not to tell to any body; not so much as to a living soul!"

To be freed quietly from the Baronet, Juliet consented to attend her; and Flora, with many smiles and nods at Sir Jaspar, begged that he would not be affronted that she did not tell all her secrets to gentlemen; and, shutting him out, began her tale.

"Now I'll tell you what it is I'm going to tell you, Miss Ellis. Do you know who I met, just now, upon the

Steyne, while I was walking with our young ladies, not thinking of any thing? You can't guess, can you? Why Sir Lyell himself. I gave such a squeak! But he spoke to all our young ladies first. And I was half a mind to cry; only I happened to be in one of my laughing fits. And when once I am upon my gig, papa says, if the world were all to tumble down, it would not hinder me of my smiling. Though I am sure I often don't know what it's for. If any body asked me, I could not tell, one time in twenty. But Sir Lyell's very clever; cleverer than I am, by half, I believe. For he got to speak to me, at last, so as nobody could hear a word he said, but just me. Nor I could not, either, but only he spoke quite in my ear."

"And do you think it right, Miss Pierson, to let gentlemen whisper you?"

"O, I could not bid him not, you know. I could not be rude to a Knight-Baronet! Besides, he said he was come down from London, on purpose for

nothing else but to see me! A Knight-Baronet, Miss Ellis! That's very good natured, is it not? I dare say he means something by it. Don't you? However, I shall know more by and by, most likely; for he whispered me to make believe I'd got a head-ache, and to come home by myself, and wait for him in my own room: for he says he has brought me the prettiest present that ever I saw from London. So you see how generous he is; i'n't he? And he'll bring it me himself, to make me a little visit. So then, very likely, he'll speak out. Won't he? But he bid me tell it to nobody. So say nothing if you see him, for it will only be the way to make him angry. I must not put the shopman in the secret, he says, for he shall only ask for old Sir Jaspar; and he shall go to him first, and make the shopman think he is with him all the time. So I told our young ladies I'd got a head-ache, sure enough; but don't be uneasy, for it's only make believe; for I'm very well."

Filled with alarm for the simple, deluded maiden, Juliet now made an undisguised representation of her danger; earnestly charging her not to receive the dangerous visit.

But Flora, self-willed, though good natured, would not hear a word.

No ass so meek;—no mule so obstinate.

She never contradicted, yet never listened; she never gave an opinion, yet never followed one. She was neither endowed with timidity to suspect her deficiencies, nor with sense to conceive how she might be better informed. She came to Juliet merely to talk; and when her prattle was over, or interrupted, she had no thought but to be gone.

"O yes, I must see him, Miss Ellis, she cried; "for you can't think how ill he'll take it, if I don't. But now we have stayed talking together so long, I can't shew you my presents till he is gone, for fear he should come. But don't mind, for then I shall have the

new ones to shew you, too. But if I don't do what he bids me, he'll be as angry as can be, for all he's my lover; (smiling.) He makes very free with me sometimes; only I don't mind it; because I'm pretty much used to it, from one or another. Sometimes he'll say I am the greatest simpleton that ever he knew in his life; for all he calls me his angel! He don't make much ceremony with me, when I don't understand his signs. But it don't much signify, for the more he's angry, the more he's kind, when it's over, (smiling.) And then he brings me prettier things than ever. So I a'n't much a loser. I've no great need to cry about it. And he says I'm quite a little goddess, often and often, if I'd believe him. Only one must not believe the men over much, when they are gentlemen, I believe."

Juliet, kindly taking her hand, would have drawn her into her own chamber; but they were no sooner in the passage, than Flora jumped back, and, shaking

with laughter at her ingenuity, shut and locked herself into her room.

Juliet now renounced, perforce, all thought of serving her except through the medium of Miss Matson; and she was returning, much vexed, to her own small apartment, when she saw Sir Jaspar, who, leaning against the banisters, seemed to have been waiting for her, step curiously forward, as she opened her door, to take a view of her chamber. With quick impulse, to check this liberty, she hastily pushed to the door; not recollecting, till too late, that the key, by which alone it was opened, was on the inside.

Chagrined, she repaired to Flora, telling the accident, and begging admittance.

Flora, laughing with all her heart, positively refused to open the door; saying that she would rather be without company.

The shop-man now came up stairs, to see what was going forward, and to en-

quire whether Miss Pierson, who had told him that she was ill, found herself worse. Flora, hastily checking her mirth, answered that her head ached, and she would lie down; and then spoke no more.

The shop-man made an attempt to enter into conversation with Juliet; but she gravely requested that he would be so good as to order a smith to open the lock of her door.

He ought not, he said, to leave the house in the absence of Miss Matson; but he would run the risk for the pleasure of obliging her, if she would only step down into the shop, to answer to the bell or the knocker.

To this, in preference to being shut out of her room, she would immediately have consented, but that she feared the arrival of Sir Lyell Sycamore. She asked the shop-man, therefore, if there were any objection to her waiting in the little parlour.

None in the world, he answered; for

he had Miss Matson's leave to use it when she was out of a Sunday; and he should be very glad if Miss Ellis would oblige him with her company.

Juliet declined this proposal with an air that repressed any further attempt at intimacy; and the shop-man returned to his post.

"I must not, I suppose," the Baronet, then advancing, said, "presume to offer you shelter under my roof from the inclemencies of the stair-case? And yet I think I may venture, without being indecorous, to mention, that I am going out for my usual airing; and that you may take possession of your old apartment, upon your own misanthropical terms. At all events, I shall leave you the door open, place some books upon the table, take out my servants, and order that no one shall molest you."

Extremely pleased by a kindness so much to her taste, Juliet would gratefully have accepted this offer, but for the visit that she knew to be designed for

the same apartment; which the absence of its master was not likely to prevent, as the pretence of writing a note, or his name, would suffice with Sir Lyell for mounting the stairs. Who then could protect Flora? Could Juliet herself come forward, when no one else remained in the house, conscious, as she could not but be, of the dishonourable views of which she, also, had been the object? The departure of Sir Jaspar appeared, therefore, to be big with mischief; and, when he was making a leave-taking bow, she almost involuntarily said, "You are forced, then, Sir, to go out this morning?"

Surprised and pleased, he answered, "What! have my little fairy elves given you a lesson of humanity? Nay, if so, though they should pommel and maul me for a month to come, I shall yet be their obedient humble servant."

He then gave orders aloud that his carriage should be put up; saying, that he had letters to write, and that his

servants might go and amuse themselves for an hour or two where they pleased.

Juliet, now, was crimsoned with shame and embarrassment. How account for thus palpably wishing him to remain in the house? or how suffer him, by silence, to suppose it was from a desire of his society? Her blushes astonished, yet, by heightening her beauty, charmed still more than they perplexed him. To settle what to think of her might be difficult and teazing; but to admire her was easy and pleasant. He approached her, therefore, with the most flattering looks and smiles; but, to avoid any mistake in his manner of addressing her, he kept his speech back, with his judgment, till he could learn her purpose.

This prudential circumspection redoubled her confusion, and she hesitatingly stammered her concern that she had prevented his airing.

More amazed still, but still more enchanted, to see her thus at a loss what to say, though evidently pleased that he

had relinquished his little excursion, he was making a motion to take her hand, which she had scarcely perceived, when a violent ringing at the door-bell, checked him; and concentrated all her solicitude in the impending danger of Flora; and, in her eagerness to rescue the simple girl from ruin, she hastily said: "Can you, Sir Jaspar, forgive a liberty in the cause of humanity? May I appeal to your generosity? You will receive a visitor in a few minutes, whom I have earnest reasons for wishing you to detain in your apartment to the last moment that is possible. May I make so extraordinary a request?"

"Request?" repeated Sir Jaspar, charmed by what he considered as an opening to intimacy; "can you utter any thing but commands? The most benignant sprite of all Fairyland, has inspired you with this gracious disposition to dub me your knight."

Yet his eyes, still bright with intelligence, and now full of fanciful wonder,

suddenly emitted an expression less rapturous, when he distinguished the voice of Sir Lyell Sycamore, in parley with the shop-man. Disappointment and chagrin soon took place of sportive playfulness in his countenance; and, muttering between his teeth, "O ho! Sir Lyell Sycamore!"—he fixed his keen eyes sharply upon Juliet; with a look in which she could not but read the ill construction to which her seeming knowledge of that young man's motions, and her apparent interest in them, made her liable; and how much his light opinion of Sir Lyell's character, affected his partial, though still fluctuating one of her own.

Sir Lyell, however, was upon the stairs, and she did not dare enter into any justification; Sir Jaspar, too, was silent; but the young baronet mounted, singing, in a loud voice,

O my love, lov'st thou me?
Then quickly come and see one who dies for thee!

"Yes here I come, Sir Lyell!"—in a

low, husky, laughing voice, cried Flora, peeping through her chamber-door; which was immediately at the head of the stairs, upon the second floor; and to which Sir Lyell looked up, softly whispering, "Be still, my little angel! and, in ten minutes—" He stopt abruptly, for Sir Jaspar now caught his astonished sight, upon the landing-place of the attic story, with Juliet retreating behind him.

"O ho! you are there, are you?" he cried, in a tone of ludicrous accusation.

"And you, you are there, are you?" answered Sir Jaspar, in a voice more seriously taunting.

Juliet, hurt and confounded, would have escaped through the garret to the back stairs; but that her hat and cloak, without which she could not leave the house, were shut into her room. She tried, therefore, to look unmoved; well aware that the best chance to escape impertinence, is by not appearing to suspect that any is intended.

Three strides now brought Sir Lyell before her. His amazement, vented by rattling exclamations, again perplexed Sir Jaspar; for how could Juliet have been apprized of his intended visit, but by himself?

Sir Lyell, mingling the most florid compliments upon her radiant beauty, and bright bloom, with his pleasure at her sight, said that, from the reports which had reached him, that she had given up her singing, and her teaching, and that Sir Jaspar had taken the room which she had inhabited, he had concluded that she had quitted Brighthelmstone. He was going rapidly on in the same strain, the observant Sir Jaspar intently watching her looks, while curiously listening to his every word; when Juliet, without seeming to have attended to a syllable, related, with grave brevity, that she had unfortunately shut in the key of her room, and must therefore seek Miss Matson, to demand another; and then, with steady steps, that studi-

ously kept in order innumerable timid fears, she descended to the shop; leaving the two Baronets mutually struck by her superiour air and manner; and each, though equally desirous to follow her, involuntarily standing still, to wait the motions of the other; and thence to judge of his pretensions to her favour.

Juliet found the shop empty, but the street-door open, and the shop-man sauntering before it, to look at the passers by. Glad to be, for a while, at least, spared the distaste of his company, she shut herself into the little parlour, carefully drawing the curtain of the glass-door.

The two Baronets, as she expected, soon descended; the younger one eager to take leave of the elder, and privately remount the stairs; and Sir Jaspar, fixed to obey the injunctions, however unaccountable, of Juliet, in detaining and keeping sight of him to the last moment.

"Decamped, I swear, the little vixen!" exclaimed Sir Lyell, striding in

first; "but why the d—l do you come down, Sir Jaspar?"

"For exercise, not ceremony," he answered; though, little wanting further exertion, and heartily tired, he dropt down upon the first chair.

Sir Lyell vainly offered his arm, and pressed to aid him back to his apartment; he would not move.

After some time thus wasted, Sir Lyell, mortified and provoked, cast himself upon the counter, and whistled, to disguise his ill humour.

A pause now ensued, which Sir Jaspar broke, by hesitatingly, yet with earnestness, saying, "Sir Lyell Sycamore, I am not, you will do me the justice to believe, a sour old fellow, to delight in mischief; a surly old dog, to mar the pleasures of which I cannot partake; if, therefore, to answer what I mean to ask will thwart any of your projects, leave me and my curiosity in the lurch; if not, you will sensibly gratify me, by a little frank communication. I don't

meddle with your affair with Flora; 'tis a blooming little wild rose-bud, but of too common a species to be worth analysing. This other young creature, however, whose wings your bird-lime seems also to have entangled —"

"How so?" interrupted Sir Lyell, jumping eagerly from the counter, "what the d—l do you mean by that?"

"Not to be indiscreet, I promise you," answered Sir Jaspar; "but as I see the interest she takes in you,—"

"The d—l you do?" exclaimed Sir Lyell, in an accent of surprize, yet of transport.

Sir Jaspar now, ironically smiling, said, "You don't know it, then, Sir Lyell? You are modest?—diffident? unconscious?—"

"My dear boy!" cried Sir Lyell, riotously, and approaching familiarly to embrace him, "what a devilish kind office I shall owe you, if you can put any good notions into my head of that delicious girl!"

New doubts now destroying his recent suspicions, Sir Jaspar held back, positively refusing to clear up what had dropt from him, and laughingly saying, "Far be it from me to put any such notions into your head! I believe it amply stored! All my desire is to get some out of it. If, therefore, you can tell me, or, rather, will tell me, who or what this young creature is, you will do a kind office to my imagination, for which I shall be really thankful. Who is she, then? And what is she?"

"D—l take me if I either know or care!" cried Sir Lyell, "further than that she is a beauty of the first water; and that I should have adored her, exclusively, three months ago, if I had not believed her a thing of alabaster. But if you think her ——"

"Not I! not I!—I know nothing of her!" interrupted Sir Jaspar: "she is a rose planted in the snow, for aught I can tell! The more I see, the less I understand; the more I surmize, the fur-

ther I seem from the mark. Honestly, then, whence does she come? How did you first see her? What does she do at Brighthelmstone?"

"May I go to old Nick if I am better informed than yourself! except that she sings and plays like twenty angels, and that all the women are jealous of her, and won't suffer a word to be said to her. However, I made up to her, at first, and should certainly have found her out, but for Melbury, who annoyed me with a long history of her virtue, and character, and Lady Aurora's friendship, and the d—l knows what; that made me so cursed sheepish, I was afraid of embarking in any measures of spirit. My sister, also, took lessons of her; and other game came into chace; and I should never have thought of her again, but that, when I went to town, a week or two ago, I learnt, from that Queen of the Crabs, Mrs. Howel, that Melbury, in fact, knows no more of her than we do. He had nobody's word but her own

for all her fine sentiments; so that he and his platonics would have kept me at bay no longer, if I had not believed her decamped from Brighthelmstone, upon hearing that you had got her lodging. How came you to turn her into the garret, my dear boy? Is that *à la mode* of your *vieille cour?*"

Sir Jaspar protested that, when he took the apartment, he knew not of her existence; and then enquired, whether Sir Lyell could tell in what name she had been upon the stage; and why she had quitted it.

"The stage? O the d—l!" he exclaimed, "has she been upon the stage?"

"Yes; I heard the fact mentioned to her, the other day, by a fellow-performer! some low player, who challenged her as a sister of the buskins."

"What a glorious Statira she must make!" cried Sir Lyell. "I am ready to be her Alexander when she will. That hint you have dropt, my dear old boy, sha'n't be thrown away upon me.

But how the d—l did you find the dear charmer out?"

Sir Jaspar again sought to draw back his information; but Sir Lyell swore that he would not so lightly be put aside from a view of success, now once it was fairly opened; and was vowing that he should begin a siege in form, and persevere to a surrender; when the conversation was interrupted, by the entrance of the shopman, accompanied by a mantua-maker, who called upon some business.

Juliet, who, from the beginning, had heard this discourse with the utmost uneasiness, and whom its conclusion had filled with indignant disgust; had no resource to avoid the yet greater evil of being joined by the interlocutors, but that of sitting motionless and unsuspected, till they should depart; or till Miss Matson should return. But her care and precaution proved vain: the shopman invited Mrs. Hart, the mantua-maker, into the little parlour; and, upon

opening the door, Juliet met their astonished view.

Sir Jaspar, not without evident anxiety, endeavoured to recollect what had dropt from him, that might hurt her; or how he might palliate what might have given her offence. But Sir Lyell, not at all disconcerted, and privately persuaded that half his difficulties were vanquished, by the accident that acquainted her with his design; was advancing, eagerly, with a volley of rapid compliments, upon his good fortune in again meeting with her; when Juliet, not deigning to seem conscious even of his presence, passed him without notice; and, addressing Mrs. Hart, entreated that she would go up stairs to the room of Miss Pierson, to examine whether it were necessary to send for any advice; as she had returned home alone, and complained of being ill. Mrs. Hart complied; and Juliet followed her to Flora's chamber-door.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE gentle tap that Mrs. Hart, fearing to disturb her, gave at the door of Flora, deceived the expecting girl into a belief that Sir Lyell was at length arrived; and crying, in a low voice, as she opened it, "O Sir! how long you have been coming!" she stared at sight of Mrs. Hart, with an amazement equal to her disappointment.

Presently, however, with a dejected look and tone, "Well, now!" she cried, "is it only you, Mrs. Hart?—I thought it had been somebody quite different!"

Mrs. Hart, entering, enquired, with surprize, why Miss Ellis had said that Miss Pierson was ill, when, on the contrary, she had never seen her look better.

"Well, now, Miss Ellis," cried Flora, whispering Juliet, "did not I tell you,

as plain as could be, 'twas nothing but make believe?"

Juliet, without offering any apology, answered, that she had invited Mrs. Hart to make her a visit.

"Why, now, what can you be thinking of?" cried Flora, angrily: "Why, you know, as well as can be, that I want to see nobody! Why, have you forgot all I told you, already, about you know who? Why I never knew the like! Why he'll be fit to kill himself! I'll never tell you any thing again, if you beg me on your knees! so there's the end to your knowing any more of my secrets! and you've nobody but yourself to thank, if it vexes you never so!"

Mrs. Hart interrupted this murmuring, by enquiring who was the *Sir* that Miss Pierson expected; adding that, if it were the shop-man, it would be more proper Miss Pierson should go down stairs, than that she should let him come up to her room.

"The shop-man?" repeated Flora,

simpering, and winking at Juliet; "no, indeed, Mrs. Hart; you have not made a very good guess there! Has she, Miss Ellis? I don't think a man of quality, and a baronet, is very like a shop-man! Do you, Miss Ellis?"

This blundering simplicity of vanity was not lost upon Mrs. Hart. "O ho!" she cried, "you expect a baronet, do you, then, Miss Pierson? Why there were no less than two Baronets in the shop as I came through, just now; and there's one of them this minute crossing the way, and turning the corner."

"O Me! is he gone, then?" cried Flora, looking out of the window. "O Me! what shall I do? O Miss Ellis! this is all your fault! And now, perhaps, he'll be so angry he'll never speak to me again! And if he don't, ten to one but it may break my heart! for that often happens when one's crossed in love. And if it does, I sha'n't thank you for it, I assure you! And it's just as likely as not!"

Juliet, though she sought to appease both her grief and her wrath, could not but rejoice that their unguarded redundance informed Mrs. Hart of the whole history: and Mrs. Hart, who, though a plain, appeared to be a very worthy woman, immediately endeavoured to save the poor young creature, from the snares into which she was rather wilfully jumping, than deludedly falling, by giving her a pressing invitation to her own house for the rest of the day. But to this, neither entreaty nor reproof could obtain consent. Flora, like many who seem gentle, was only simple; and had neither docility nor comprehension for being turned aside from the prosecution of her wishes. To be thwarted in any desire, she considered as cruelty, and resented as ill treatment. She refused, therefore, to leave the house, while hoping for the return of Sir Lyell; and continued her childish wailing and fretting, till accident led her eyes to a favourite little box; when, her tears

suddenly stopping, and her face brightening, she started up, seized, opened it, and, displaying a very pretty pair of ear-rings, exclaimed, "Oh, I have never shewn you my presents, Miss Ellis! And now Mrs. Hart may have a peep at them, too. So she's in pretty good luck, I think!"

And then, with exulting pleasure, she produced all the costly trinkets that she had received from Sir Lyell; with some few, less valuable, which had been presented to her by Sir Jaspar; and all the baubles, however insignificant or babyish, that had been bestowed upon her by her friends and relatives, from her earliest youth. And these, with the important and separate history of each, occupied, unawares, her time, till the return of Miss Matson.

Mrs. Hart then descended, and, urged by Juliet, briefly and plainly communicated the situation and the danger of the young apprentice.

Miss Matson, affrighted for the credit

of her shop, determined to send for the mother of Flora, who resided at Lewes, the next day.

Relieved now from her troublesome and untoward charge, Juliet had her door opened, and re-took possession of her room.

And there, a new view of her own helpless and distressed condition, filled and dejected her with new alarm. The licentiously declared purpose of Sir Lyell had been shocking to her ears; and the consciousness that he knew that she was informed of his intention added to its horrour, from her inability to shew her resentment, in the only way that suited her character or her disposition, that of positively seeing him no more. But how avoid him while she had no other means of subsistence than working in an open shop?

The following morning but too clearly justified her apprehensive prognostics, of the improprieties to which her defenceless state made her liable. At an early

hour, Sir Lyell, gay, courteous, gallant, entered the shop, under pretence of enquiring for Sir Jaspar; whom he knew to be invisible, from his infirmities, to all but his own nurses and servants, till noon. Miss Matson was taciturn and watchful, though still, from the fear of making an enemy, respectful; while Flora, simpering and blushing, was ready to jump into his arms, in her eagerness to apologize for not having waited alone for him, according to his directions: but he did not look at Miss Matson, though he addressed her; nor address Flora, though, by a side glance, he saw her expectations; his attention, from the moment that he had asked, without listening to any answer, whether he could see Sir Jaspar, was all, and even publicly devoted to Juliet; whom he approached with an air of homage, and accosted with the most flattering compliments upon her good looks and her beauty.

Juliet turned aside from him, with an

indignant disgust, in which she hoped he would read her resentment of his scheme, and her abhorrence of his principles. But those who are deep in vice are commonly incredulous of virtue. Sir Lyell took her apparent displeasure, either for a timidity which flattery would banish, or an hypocrisy which boldness would conquer. He continued, therefore, his florid adulation to her charms; regarding the heightened colour of offended purity, but as an augmented attraction.

Juliet perceived her failure to repress his assurance, with a disturbance that was soon encreased, by the visible jealousy manifested in the pouting lips and frowning brow of Flora; who, the moment that Sir Lyell, saying that he would call upon Sir Jaspar again, thought it prudent to retire, began a convulsive sobbing; averring that she saw why she had been betrayed; for that it was only to inveigle away her sweetheart.

Pity for the ignorant accuser, might

have subdued the disdain due to the accusation, and have induced Juliet to comfort her by a self-defence; but for a look, strongly expressing a suspicion to the same effect, from Miss Matson; which was succeeded by a general tossing up of the chins of the young workwomen, and a murmur of, "I wonder how she would like to be served so herself!"

This was too offensive to be supported, and she retired to her chamber.

If, already, the mingled frivolity and publicity of the business into which she had entered, had proved fatiguing to her spirits, and ungenial to her disposition; surmises, such as she now saw raised, of a petty and base rivality, urged by a pursuit the most licentious, rendered all attempt at its continuance intolerable. Without, therefore, a moment's hesitation, she determined to relinquish her present enterprise.

The only, as well as immediate notion that occurred to her, in this new diffi-

culty, was to apply to Mrs. Hart, who seemed kind as well as civil, for employment.

When she was summoned, therefore, by Miss Matson, with surprize and authority, back to the shop, she returned equipped for going abroad; and, after thanking her for the essay which she had permitted to be made in the millinery-business, declared that she found herself utterly unfit for so active and so public a line of life.

Leaving then Miss Matson, Flora, and the young journey-women to their astonishment, she bent her course to the house of Mrs. Hart; where her application was happily successful. Mrs. Hart had work of importance just ordered for a great wedding in the neighbourhood, and was glad to engage so expert a hand for the occasion; agreeing to allow, in return, bed, board, and a small stipend per day.

With infinite relief, Juliet went back to make her little preparations, and take

leave of Miss Matson; by whom she was now followed to her room, with many earnest instances that she would relinquish her design. Miss Matson, in unison with the very common character to which she belonged, had appreciated Juliet not by her worth, her talents, or her labours, but by her avowed distress, and acknowledged poverty. Notwithstanding, therefore, her abilities and her industry, she had been uniformly considered as a dead weight to the business, and to the house. But now, when it appeared that the pennyless young woman had some other resource, the eyes of Miss Matson were suddenly opened to merits to which she had hitherto been blind. She felt all the advantages which the shop would lose by the departure of such an assistant; and recollected the many useful hints, in fashion and in elegance, which had been derived from her taste and fancy: her exemplary diligence in work; her gentle quietness of behaviour; and the numberless custom-

ers, which the various reports that were spread of her history, had drawn to the shop. All, now, however, was unavailing; the remembrance of what was over occurred too late to change the plan of Juliet; though a kinder appreciation of her character and services, while she was employed, might have engaged her to try some other method of getting rid of the libertine Baronet.

Miss Matson then admonished her not to lose, at least, the benefit of her premium.

"What premium?" cried Juliet.

"Why that Sir Jaspar paid down for you."

Juliet, astonished, now learnt, that her admission as an inmate of the shop, which she had imagined due to the gossipping verbal influence of Miss Bydel, was the result of the far more substantial money-mediation of Sir Jaspar.

She felt warmly grateful for his benevolence; yet wounded, in reflecting upon his doubts whether she deserved

it; and confounded to owe another, and so heavy an obligation, to an utter stranger.

She was finishing her little package, when the loud sobbings of Flora, while mounting the stairs for a similar, though by no means as voluntary a purpose, induced her to go forth, with a view to offer some consolation; but Flora, not less resentful than disconsolate, said that her mother was arrived to take her from all her fine prospects; and loaded Juliet with the unqualified accusation, of having betrayed her secrets, and ruined her fortune.

Juliet had too strong a mind to suffer weak and unjust censure to breed any repentance that she had acted right. She could take one view only of the affair; and that brought only self-approvance of what she had done: if Sir Lyell meant honourably, Flora was easily followed; if not, she was happily rescued from earthly perdition.

Nevertheless, she had too much sweet-

ness of disposition, and too much benevolence of character, to be indifferent to reproach; though her vain efforts, either to clear her own conduct, or to appease the angry sorrows of Flora, all ended by the indignantly blubbering damsel's turning from her in sulky silence.

Juliet then took a quick leave of Miss Matson, and of the young journeywomen; and repaired to her new habitation.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

EXPERIENCE, the mother of caution, now taught Juliet explicitly to make known to her new chief, that she had no view to learn the art of mantua-making as a future trade, or employment; but simply desired to work at it in such details, as a general knowledge of the use of the needle might make serviceable and expeditious: no premium, therefore, could be expected by the mistress; and the workwoman would be at liberty to continue, or to renounce her engagement, from day to day.

This agreement offered to her ideas something which seemed like an approach to the self-dependence, that she had so earnestly coveted: she entered, therefore, upon her new occupation with cheerfulness and alacrity, and with

a diligence to which the hope, by being useful, to become necessary, gave no relaxation.

The business, by this scrupulous devotion to its interests, was forwarded with such industry and success, that she soon became the open and decided favourite of the mistress whom she served; and who repaid her exertions by the warmest praise, and proposed her as a pattern to the rest of the sewing sisterhood.

This approbation could not but cheer the toil of one whose mind, like that of Juliet, sought happiness, at this moment, only from upright and blameless conduct. She was mentally, also, relieved, by the local change of situation. She was now employed in a private apartment; and, though surrounded by still more fellow-work-women than at Miss Matson's, she was no longer constrained to remain in an open shop, in opposition alike to her inclinations and her wishes of concealment; no longer startled by

the continual entrance and exit of strangers; nor exposed to curious enquirers, or hardy starers; and no longer fatigued by the perpetual revision of goods. She worked in perfect quietness, undisturbed and uninterrupted; her mistress was civil, and gave her encouragement; her fellow-semptresses were unobservant, and left her to her own reflexions.

It is not, however, in courts alone that favour is perilous; in all circles, and all classes, from the most eminent to the most obscure, the "Favourite has no friend*!" The praises and the comparisons, by which Mrs. Hart hoped to stimulate her little community to emulation, excited only jealousy, envy, and ill will; and a week had not elapsed, in this new and short tranquillity, before Juliet found that her superiour diligence was regarded, by her needle-sisterhood, as a mean artifice "to set herself off to advantage at their cost." Sneers and

* Gray.

hints to this effect followed every panegyric of Mrs. Hart; and robbed approbation of its pleasure, though they could not of its value.

Chagrined by a consequence so unpleasant, to an industry that demanded fortitude, not discouragement; Juliet now felt the excess of her activity relax; and soon experienced a desire, if not a necessity, to steal some moments from application, for retirement and for herself.

Here, again, she found the mischief to which ignorance of life had laid her open. The unremitting diligence with which she had begun her new office, had advanced her work with a rapidity, that made the smallest relaxation cause a sensible difference in its progress: and Mrs. Hart, from first looking disappointed, asked next, whether nothing more were done? and then observed, how much quicker business had gone on the first week. In vain Juliet still executed more than all around her; the comparison was never made there, where

it might have been to her advantage; all reference was to her own setting out; and she was soon taught to forgive the displeasure which, so inadvertently, she had excited, when she saw the claims to which she had made herself liable, by an incautious eagerness of zeal to reward, as well as earn, the maintenance which she owed to Mrs. Hart.

Alas, she thought, with what upright intentions may we be injudicious! I have thrown away the power of obliging, by too precipitate an eagerness to oblige! I retain merely that of avoiding to displease, by my most indefatigable application! All I can perform seems but a duty, and of course; all I leave undone, seems idleness and neglect. Yet what is the labour that never requires respite? What the mind, that never demands a few poor unshackled instants to itself?

From this time, the little pleasure which she had been able to create for herself, from the virtue of her exertions,

was at an end: to toil beyond her fellow-labourers, was but to provoke ill will; to allow herself any repose, was but to excite disapprobation. Hopeless, therefore, either way, she gave, with diligence, her allotted time to her occupation, but no more: all that remained, she solaced, by devoting to her pen and Gabriella, with whom her correspondence, — her sole consolation, — was unremitting.

This unaffected conduct had its customary effect; it destroyed at once the too hardly earned favour of Mrs. Hart, and the illiberal, yet too natural enmity of her apprentices; and, in the course of a very few days, Juliet was neither more esteemed, nor more censured, than any of her sisters of the sewing tribe.

With the energy, however, of her original wishes and efforts, died all that could reconcile her to this sort of life. The hope of pleasing, which alone could soften its hardships, thus forcibly set

aside, left nothing in its place, but calmness without contentment; dulness without serenity.

Experience is not more exclusively the guide of our judgment, than comparison is the mistress of our feelings. Juliet now, also, found, that, local publicity excepted, there was nothing to prefer in her new to her former situation; and something to like less. The employment itself was by no means equally agreeable for its disciples. The taste and fancy, requisite for the elegance and variety of the light work which she had quitted; however ineffectual to afford pleasure when called forth by necessity, rendered it, at least, less irksome, than the wearying sameness of perpetual basting, running, and hemming. Her fellow-labourers, though less pert and less obtrusive than those which she had left, had the same spirit for secret cabal, and the same passion for frolic and disguise; and also, like those, were all prattle and confidential sociability, in the absence of

the mistress; all sullenness and taciturnity, in her presence. What little difference, therefore, she found in her position, was, that there she had been disgusted by under-bred flippancy; here, she was deadened by uninteresting monotony; and that there, perpetual motion, and incessant change of orders, and of objects, affected her nerves; while here, the unvarying repetition of stitch after stitch, nearly closed in sleep her faculties, as well as her eyes.

The little stipend which, by agreement, she was paid every evening, though it occasioned her the most satisfactory, by no means gave her the most pleasant feeling, of the day. However respectable reason and justice render pecuniary emolument, where honourably earned; there is a something indefinable, which stands between spirit and delicacy, that makes the first reception of money in detail, by those not brought up to gain it, embarrassing and painful.

During this tedious and unvaried

period, if some minutes were snatched from fatiguing uniformity, it was only by alarm and displeasure, through the intrusion of Sir Lyell Sycamore; who, though always denied admission to herself, made frequent, bold, and frivolous pretences for bursting into the workroom. At one time, he came to enquire about a gown for his sister, of which Mrs. Hart had never heard; at another, to look at a trimming for which she had had no commission; and at a third, to hurry the finishing of a dress, which had already been sent home. The motive to these various mock messages, was too palpable to escape even the most ordinary observation; yet though the perfect conduct, and icy coldness of Juliet, rescued her from all evil imputation amongst her companions, she saw, with pique and even horrour, that they were insufficient to repress the daring and determined hopes and expectations of the licentious Baronet; with whom the unexplained hint of Sir Jaspar had left

a firm persuasion, that the fair object of his views more than returned his admiration; and waited merely for a decent attack, or proper offers, to acknowledge her secret inclinations.

Juliet, however shocked, could only commit to time her cause, her consistency, her vindication.

Three weeks had, in this manner, elapsed, when the particular business for which Mrs. Hart had wanted an odd hand was finished; and Juliet, who had believed that her useful services would keep her employed at her own pleasure, abruptly found that her occupation was at an end.

Here again, the wisdom of experience was acquired only by distress. The pleasure with which she had considered herself free, because engaged but by the day, was changed into the alarm of finding herself, from that very circumstance, without employment or home; and she now acknowledged the providence of those ties, which, from only feeling their

inconvenience, she had thought oppressive and unnecessary. The established combinations of society are not to be judged by the personal opinions, and varying feelings, of individuals; but by general proofs of reciprocated advantages. If the needy helper require regular protection, the recompensing employer must claim regular service; and Juliet now saw, that though in being contracted but by the day, she escaped all continued constraint, and was set freshly at liberty every evening; she was, a stranger to security, subject to dismission, at the mercy of accident, and at the will of caprice.

Thus perplexed and thus helpless, she applied to Mrs. Hart, for counsel how to obtain immediate support. Gratified by the application, Mrs. Hart again recommended her as a pattern to the young sisterhood; and then gave her advice, that she should bind herself, either to some milliner or some mantua-maker, as a journey-woman for three years.

Painfully, again, Juliet attained further knowledge of the world, in learning the danger of asking counsel; except of the candid and wise, who know how to modify it by circumstances, and who will listen to opposing representations.

Mrs. Hart, from the moment that Juliet declined to be guided wholly by her judgment, lost all interest in her young work-woman's distresses. "If people won't follow advice," she said, "'tis a sign they are not much to be pitied." Vainly Juliet affirmed, that reasons which she could not explain, put it out of her power to take any measure so decisive; that, far from fixing her own destiny for three years, she had no means to ascertain, or scarcely even to conjecture, what it might be in three days; or perhaps in three hours; although in the interval of suspense, she was not less an object for present humanity, from the incertitude of what either her wants or her abundance might be in

future; vainly she reasoned, vainly she pleaded. Mrs. Hart always made the same reply: "If people won't follow advice, 'tis a sign they are not much to be pitied."

In consequence of this maxim, Juliet next heard, that the small room and bed which she occupied, were wanted for another person.

Alas! she thought, how long must we mingle with the world, ere we learn how to live in it! Must we demand no help from the understandings of others, unless we submit to renounce all use of our own?

These reflexions soon led her to hit upon the only true medium, for useful and safe general intercourse with the mass of mankind: that of avowing embarrassments, without demanding counsel; and of discussing difficulties, and gathering opinions, as matters of conversation; but always to keep in mind, that to ask advice, without a pre-determination to follow it, is to call for censure, and to risk resentment.

Thus died away in Juliet the short joy of freedom from the controul of positive engagements.

Such freedom, she found, was but a source of perpetual difficulty and instability. She had the world to begin again; a new pursuit to fix upon; new recommendations to solicit; and a new dwelling to seek.

CHAPTER XLIX.

JULIET was making enquiries of the young work-women, for a recommendation to some small lodging, when she was surprised by the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Pierson, soliciting her company immediately at Lewes; where poor Flora, she said, was taken dangerously ill of a high fever, and was raving, continually, for Miss Ellis. A return post-chaise, to the postilion of which Mrs. Pierson had given directions to call at Mrs. Hart's, at three o'clock in the afternoon, would bring her, for nearly nothing; if she would have so much charity as to come and comfort the poor girl; and Mrs. Pierson would find a safe conveyance back at night, if Miss Ellis could not oblige them by sleeping at the house: but she hoped that Mrs. Hart would not refuse to spare her from her

work, for a few hours, as it might produce a favourable turn in the disorder.

Juliet read this letter with real concern. Had she rescued the poor, weak, and wilful Flora from immediate moral, only to devote her to immediate physical, destruction? And what now could be devised for her relief? Her intellects were too feeble for reason, her temper was too petulant for entreaty. Nevertheless, the benevolent are easily urged to exertion; and Juliet would not refuse the summons of the distressed mother, while she could flatter herself that any possible means might be suggested for serving the self-willed, and half-witted, but innocent daughter.

She set out, therefore, upon this plan, far from sanguine of success, but persuaded that the effort was a duty.

By her own calculations from memory, she was arrived within about a mile of Lewes, when the horses suddenly turned down a narrow lane.

She demanded of the postilion why

he did not proceed straight forward. He answered, that he knew a short cut to the house of Mrs. Pierson. Uneasy, nevertheless, at quitting thus alone the high road, she begged him to go the common way, promising to reward him for the additional time which it might require. But he drove on without replying; though, growing now alarmed, she called, supplicated, and menaced in turn.

She looked from window to window to seek some object to whom she might apply for aid; none appeared, save a man on horseback, whom she had already noticed from time to time, near the side of the chaise; and to whom she was beginning an appeal, when she surprised him making signs to hurry on the postilion.

She now believed the postilion himself to be leagued with some highwayman; and was filled with affright and dismay.

The horses galloped on with encreased

swiftness, the horseman always keeping closely behind the chaise; till they were stopt by a small cart, from which Juliet had the joy to see two men alight, forced, by the narrowness of the road, to take off their horse, and drag back their vehicle.

She eagerly solicited their assistance, and made an effort to open the chaise door. This, however, was prevented by the pursuing horseman, who, dismounting, opened it himself; and, to her inexpressible terrour, sprung into the carriage.

What, then, was her mingled consternation and astonishment, when, instead of demanding her purse, he gaily exclaimed, "Why are you frightened, you beautiful little creature?" And she saw Sir Lyell Sycamore.

A change, but not a diminution of alarm, now took place; yet, assuming a firmness that sought to conceal her fears, "Quit the chaise, Sir Lyell," she cried,

"instantly, or you will compel me to claim protection from those two men!"

"Protection? you pretty little vixen!" cried he, yet more familiarly, "who should protect you like your own adorer?"

Juliet, leaning out, as far as was in her power, from the chaise-window, called with energy for help.

"What do you mean?" cried he, striving to draw her back. "What are you afraid of? You don't imagine me such a blundering cavalier, as to intend to carry you off by force?"

The postilion was assisting the two men to fix their horse, for dragging back their cart; but her cries reached their ears, and one of them, advancing to the chaise, exclaimed, "Good now! if it is not Miss Ellis!" And, to her infinite relief and comfort, she beheld young Gooch.

She entreated him to open the door; but, lolling his arms over it, without attending to her, he said, "Well! to see

but how things turn out! Here have I been twice this very morning, at your new lodgings, to let you know it's now or never, for our junket's to night; and the old gentlewoman that keeps the house, who's none of the good-naturedest, as I take it, would never let me get a sight of you, say what I would; and here, all of the sudden, when I was thinking of you no more than if you had never been born, I come pop upon you, as one may say, within cock-crow of our very door; all alone, with only the young Baronight!"

Nearly as much shocked, now, as, the moment before, she had been relieved, Juliet eagerly declared, that she was not with any body; she was simply going to Lewes upon business.

"Why then," cried he, "the Baronight must be out of his head, begging his pardon, to let you come this way; and the postilion as stupid as a post; for it's quite the contrary. It will lead you to you don't know where. We only

turned down it ourselves, just to borrow a few glasses, of farmer Barnes, because we've more mouths than we have got of our own: for I've invited all our club; which poor dad don't much like. He says I am but a bungler at saving money, any more than at getting it; but I am as rare a hand as any you know, far or near, says the old gentleman, for spending it. The old gentleman likes to say his say. However, I must not leave my horse to his gambols."

Then nodding, still without listening to Juliet, he returned to his *chay-cart.*

Juliet now unhasped the chaise-door herself, and was springing from the carriage; when Sir Lyell, forcibly holding her, exclaimed, "What would you do, you lovely termagant? Would you make me pass for a devil of a ravisher? No, no, no! you handsome little firebrand! name your terms, and command me! I know you love me,—and I adore you. Why then this idle cruelty to us both? to nature itself; and to beauty?"

More and more indignant, Juliet uttered a cry for help, that immediately brought back young Gooch, who was followed by an elderly companion.

Provoked and resentful, yet amazed and ashamed, the Baronet jumped out of the chaise, saying, with affected contempt, yet stronger pique, "Yes! help, gentlemen, help! come quick! quick! Miss Ellis is taken suddenly ill!"

The insolent boldness of this appeal, was felt only by Juliet; whose scorn, however potent, was less prevalent than her satisfaction, upon beholding her old friend Mr. Tedman. She descended to meet him, with an energetic "Thank Heaven!" and an excess of gladness, not more tormenting to the Baronet, than unexpected by himself. "Well, this is very kind of you, indeed, my dear," cried he, heartily shaking hands with her; "to be so glad to see me; especially after the ungenteel way I was served in by your lodging-gentlewoman, making no more ceremony than refusing

to let me up, under cover that you saw no gentlemen; though I told her what a good friend I had been to you; and how you learnt my darter the musics; and how I used to bring you things; and lend you money; and that; and how I was willing enough to do the like again, put in case you was in need: but I might just as well have talked to the post; which huffed me a little, I own."

"O, those old gentlewomen," interrupted Gooch, "are always like that. One can never make any thing of 'em. I don't over like them myself, to tell you the truth."

Juliet assured them that, having no time but for business, her injunctions of non-admission had been uniform and universal; and ought not, therefore, to offend any one. She then requested Mr. Tedman to order that the postilion would return to the high road; which he had quitted against her positive direction; and to have the goodness to insist upon his driving her by the side of his own vehicle, till they reached Lewes.

Tedman, looking equally important and elated, again heartily shook hands with her, and said, " My dear, I'll do it with pleasure ; or, I'll engage Tim to send off your chay, and I'll take you in his'n ; put in case it will be more to your liking ; for I am as little agreeable as you are, to letting them rascals of drivers get the better of me."

Juliet acceded to this proposal, in which she saw immediate safety, with the most lively readiness ; entreating Mr. Tedman to complete his kindness, in extricating her from so suspicious a person, by paying him the half-crown, which she had promised him, for carrying her to Lewes.

" Half-a-crown ?" repeated Mr. Tedman, angrily refusing to take it. " It's too much by half, for coming such a mere step ; put in case he did not put to o'purpose. You're just like the quality ; and they're none of your sharpest ; to throw away your money, and know neither the why nor the wherefore."

The Baronet, with a loud oath, said that the postilion was a scoundrel, for having offended the young lady; and menaced to inform against him, if he received a sixpence.

The postilion made no resistance; the horses were taken off, and the chaise was drawn back to the high road. The little carriage belonging to young Gooch followed, into which Juliet, refusing all aid but from Mr. Tedman, eagerly sprang; and her old friend placed himself at her side; while Gooch took the reins.

Sir Lyell looked on, visibly provoked; and when they were driving away, called out, in a tone between derision and indignation, "Bravo, Mr. Tedman! You are still, I see, the happy man!"

Young Gooch, laughing without scruple, smacked his horse; while Mr. Tedman angrily muttered, "The quality always allows themselves to say any thing! They think nothing of that! All's one to them whether one likes it or not."

The design of Juliet was, when safely arrived at the farm, which was within a very short walk of the town of Lewes, to beg a safe guide to accompany her to the house of Mrs. Pierson; where she resolved to pass the night; and whence she determined to write to Elinor, and solicit an interview; in which she meant to lay open her new difficulties, in the hope of re-awakening some interest that might operate in her favour.

To save herself from the vulgar forwardness of ignorant importunity, she forbore to mention her plan, till she alighted from the little vehicle, at the gate of the farm-yard.

"Goodness! Ma'am," then cried young Gooch, "you won't think of such a thing as going away, I hope, before you've well come? Why our sport's all ready! why, if you'll step a little this way, you may see the three sacks, that three of our men are to run a race in! There'll be fine scrambling and tumbling, one o' top o' t'other. You'll laugh till

you split your sides. And if you'll only come here, to the right, I'll shew you the stye where our pig is, that's to be caught by the tail. But it will be well soaped, I can tell you; so it will be no such easy thing."

Slightly thanking him, Juliet applied for aid, in procuring her a conductor, to Mr. Tedman; who, though at first he pressed her to stay, as she might get a little amusement so pure cheap, since it would cost nothing but looking on; no sooner heard her pronounce that she was called away by business, than he ceased all opposition; and promised to take care of her to Lewes himself, when he'd just spoken a word or two to his cousin Gooch: "For I can't go with you, my dear, only I and you, you know, without that," he said, "just upon coming; for fear it should put them upon joking; which I don't like; for all the quality's so fond of it. Besides which, I must give in my presents; for this little hamper's full of little odd things for the

junket; and if I leave 'em out here, to the mercy of nobody knows who, somebody or other 'll be a pilfering, as sure as a gun; put in case they smoke what I've got in my hamper. And they're pretty quick at mischief."

Juliet supplicated him to be speedy. Pleased to have his services accepted, he put his hamper under his arm, and walked on to the house; mindless of the impatient remonstrances of young Gooch, who exclaimed, "Why now, who'd have thought this of the 'Squire? it's doing just contrary; for he's the very person I thought would make you stay! for he's come, as one may say, half o' purpose for your sake; for he never plump accepted of our invitation till I told him, in my letter, of my having invited of you. And then he said he would come."

Then, lowering his voice into a whisper, he added, "Between ourselves, Ma'am, the poor 'Squire, my good cousin, don't get much for his money

at home, I believe. His daughter's got quite the top end; and she's none of your obligingests; she won't do one mortal thing he desires. She's been brought up at them fine boarding-schools, with misses that hold up their heads so high, that nothing's good enough for 'em. So she's always ashamed of her papa, because, she says, he's so mean; as he tells us. The poor 'Squire, my cousin, don't much like it; but he can't help himself. She's as exact like a fine lady as ever you see; and she won't speak a word to any of her poor relations, because they are so low, she says." He then added, "If you won't go while I'm gone, I'll give you as agreeable a surprize as ever you had in your life!"

He ran on to the house.

In a few minutes, Juliet felt something tickle the nape of her neck, and, imagining it to be an insect, she would have brushed it away with her hand, but received, between her fingers, a pink; and, looking round, saw Flora Pierson, nearly

breathless from her efforts to smother a laugh.

"Is it possible?" cried Juliet, in great amazement. "Miss Pierson! I thought you were ill in bed?"

No further efforts were necessary to repress the laugh; resentment, rather than gravity, took its place, and, with pouting lips, and a frowning brow, she answered, "Ill? Yes! I have had enough to make me ill, that's sure! It's more a wonder, by half, that I a'n't dead; for I cried so that my eyes grew quite little; and I looked quite a fright; and I grew so hoarse that nobody could tell a word I said; though I talked enough, I'm sure; for nothing can hinder me of my talking, if it was never so, papa says."

Juliet, now, upon closer enquiry, learnt that Flora had neither had a fever, nor desired a meeting; and that Mrs. Pierson had neither written the letter, nor given any orders about a return post-chaise.

The passing suspicions, which already had occurred to Juliet in disfavour of

Sir Lyell Sycamore, returned, now, with redoubled force. That he had made signs to the driver to quit the high road, however dismaying, she had attributed to sudden impulse, upon meeting her alone in a post-chaise; and had not doubted that, upon seeing the sincerity of her resentment, he would have retired with shame and repentance: but a plan thus concerted to get her into his power, changed apprehension into certainty, and indignation into abhorrence.

The happy accident to which she owed her escape, even from the knowledge, till it was past, of her danger, she now blessed with rapture; and the junket, so disdained and rejected, she now felt that she could never recollect without grateful delight.

But how return to Brighthelmstone? What vehicle find? How trust herself to any even when procured?

She enquired of Flora whether it were possible that Mrs. Pierson could grant her one night's lodging?

The smiles, the dimples, and the good humour of the simple girl, all revived, and played about her pretty face, at this request. "O yes!" she cried. "Miss Ellis, I shall be so glad to have you come! for mamma and I are so dull together that I'm quite moped. I don't like it by half as well as I did the shop. So many smart gentlemen and ladies coming in and out every moment! dressed so nice, and speaking so polite! I'm obliged to wear all my worst things, now, to save my others, mamma says, for fear of the expence. And it makes me not look as well by half, as I did at Miss Matson's. I looked well enough there, I believe; as people told me; at least the gentlemen. But I go such a dowd, here, that it's enough to frighten you. I'm sure when I go to the glass, and that's a hundred times a-day, for aught I know, if it were counted, to see what sort of a figure I make, I could break it with pleasure, for seeing me such a disguise; for I look quite ugly, unless I happen to be in my smilings."

This prattle was interrupted by a signal from Mr. Tedman, that made Juliet hope that he was now ready to depart; but, upon approaching him, he only said, "Come hither, my dear, and sit down a bit, upon this bench, for we can't go yet. I have not given all my presents. And I don't care to leave 'em!" winking significantly: "not that I mean to doubt any body; only it's as well have a sharp eye. We are all honestest with good looking after."

Juliet now was surrounded by young farmers, who offered her cakes, or ale, and asked her hand for the ensuing dance; while young Gooch collected around him an admiring audience, to listen to his account, how he and the young gentlewoman, who was so pretty, had acted together in a play.

Mr. Tedman then bid her divine how his cousin Gooch was employed, and why the presents were not yet delivered? and upon her declared inability to conjecture, "Would you believe it, my dear?"

he cried, " For all Tim drove us such a good round trot, the quality got the start of us! And now he's in the kitchen, with cousin Gooch, taking a cup of ale !"

The disturbance of Juliet at this intelligence, he thought simply surprize, and continued, " Nay, it was not easy to guess, sure enough. He must have rid over every thing, hedge, ditch, and the like. But your quality's not over mindful of other people's property. He's come to buy some hay. He come o'purpose, he says. And he's a mortalgood customer, for he says nothing but, ' Mighty well! That's very reasonable, indeed! I thought it had been twice the price!' Old coz chuckles, I warrant him! Your quality's but a poor hand at a bargain. I would not employ 'em, between you and I. They never know what they are about."

They were now joined by Mr. Gooch, a hale, hearty, cherry-cheeked dapper farmer, fair in all his dealings, and up-

right in all his principles, except when they had immediate reference to his professional profits. " Well!" he cried, " 'Squire!" rubbing his hands in great glee. " I've had a good chapman enough here! I've often seen un at our races, but I little thought of having to chaffer with un. Howsever, one may have worse luck with one's money. A don't much understand business. But who's that pretty lass with ye, 'Squire? Some play-mate, I warrant, of cousin Molly? And why did no' cousin Molly come, too? A'd a have been heartily welcome. And perhaps a'd a picked up a sweetheart."

" Stop, father, stop!" cried young Gooch: " I've something to say to you. You know how you've always stood to it, that you would not believe a word about all those battles, and guillotines, and the like, of Mounseer Robert Speer, in foreign parts; though I told you, over and over, that I had it from our club? Well! here's a person now here, in your

own grounds, that's seen it all with her own eyes! So if you don't believe it now, I'll bet what wager you will, you'll never believe it as long as you live."

"Like enough not, Tim," answered the father: "I do no' much give my mind to believing all them outlandish fibs, told by travellers. I can hear staring stories eno' by my own fire-side. And I a'n't over friendly to believing 'em there. But, bless my heart! for a man for to come for to go for to pretend telling me, because it be a great ways off, and I can't find un out, that there be a place where there comes a man, who says, every morning of his life, to as many of his fellow-creatures as a can set eyes on, whether they be man, woman, or baby; here, mount me two or three dozen of you into that cart, and go and have your heads chopt off! And that they'll make no more ado, than go, only because they're bid! Why if one will believe such staring stuff as that be, one may as well believe that the moon be made

of cream-cheese, and the like. There's no sense in such a set of lies; for life's life every where, even in France; thof it be but a poor starving place, at best, without pasture, or cattle; or corn, either, t for a man for to eat."

"Ay, father, ay; but Bob Spear, as we call him at our club—"

"Y're young, y're young, Tim," interrupted Mr. Gooch; "and your youngsters do believe every thing. When you've sold your wild oats, you'll know better. But we must n't all be calves at the same time. If there were none for to give milk, there'd be none for to suck. So it be all for the best. And that makes me for to take it the less to heart, when I do see you be such a gudgeon, Tim, with no more sense than to swallow neat down every thing that do come in your way. But you'll never thrive, Tim, till you be like to what I be; people do tell such a peck of staring lies, that I do no' believe, nor I wo' no' believe one mortal word by hearsay."

"For my part," said Mr. Tedman, "I never enquire into all that, whether it be true, or whether it be false; because it's nothing to me either way; and one wastes a deal of time in idle curiosity, about things that don't concern one; put in case one can't turn them to one's profit."

"That's true, coz," said Mr. Gooch; "for as to profit, there be none to come from foreign parts: for they be all main poor thereabout; for, they do tell me, that there be not a man among un, as sets his eyes, above once in his life, or thereabout, upon a golden guinea! And as to roast beef and plum-pudding, I do hear that they do no' know the taste of such a thing. So that they be but a poor stinted race at best, for they can never come to their natural growth."

"What, then, you do believe what folks tell you sometimes, father?" cried the son, grinning.

"To be sure I do, Tim; when they

do tell me somewhat that be worth a man's hearing."

They were now joined by Mr. Stubbs, who, seeing Juliet, was happy in the opportunity of renewing his favourite enquiries, relative to the agricultural state of the continent.

Mr. Gooch, extremely surprized, exclaimed, "Odds heart! Why sure such a young lass as that be, ha'n't been across seas already? Why a could n't make out their gibberish, I warrant me! for 't be such queer stuff that they do talk, all o'un, that there's no getting at what they'd be at; unless one larns to speak after the same guise, like to our boarding-school misses. I've seen one or two o'un myself, that passed here about; but their manner o' talk was so out of the way, I could no' make out a word they did say. T'might all be Dutch for me. And I found 'em vast ignorant. They knew no more than my horse when land ought for to be manured, from when it ought for to lie fallow. I did ask un

a many questions; but a could no' answer me, for to be understood."

"But, for all that, Master Gooch," said Mr. Stubbs, "my late Lord has told me that France is sincerely a fine country, if they knew how to make the most of it; but the waste lands are quite out of reason; for they are such a boggling set of farmers, that they grow nothing but what comes, as one may say, of itself."

"France a fine country, Maister Stubbs? Well, that be a word I did no' count to hear from a man of your sense. Why't be as poor a place as ye might wish to set eyes on, all over-run with weeds, and frogs, and the like. Why ye be as frenchified as Tim, making out them mounseers to be a parcel of Jack the Giant-killers, lopping off heads for mere play, as a body may say. However, here be one that's come to our hop, that be a finer spark than there be in all France, I warrant me: for a makes a bow as like to a mounseer, as if a was twin-brother to un; and a

was so ready to pay down his money handsomely, I could no' but say a'd be welcome to our junket; for a says a does like such a thing more than all them new fangled balls and concerts."

"Oh, and you believe that upon hear-say, do you, father?" cried Tim, sneeringly.

"Yes, to be sure, I do, Tim. When a man do say a thing that ha' got some sense in it, why should no' I believe un, Tim?"

Juliet, who from what had preceded, had concluded the Baronet to be gone, earnestly now pressed Mr. Tedman to fulfil his kind engagement; but in vain: Mr. Gooch brought his best silver tankard, to insist upon his cousin's drinking success to the new purchase, that occasioned the junket; and Tim was outrageous at the proposal of retiring, just as the feats were going to commence. "Before five minutes are over," said he, "the pig will begin!"

"Well," answered Mr. Tedman, "it

is but a silly thing, to be sure, things of that sort; and I never give my mind to them; but still, as it's a thing I never saw, put in case you've no objections, we'll just stay for the pig, my dear."

Flora, having now gathered that *the quality* meant Sir Lyell Sycamore, began dancing and singing, in a childish extacy of delight, that shewed her already, in idea, Lady Sycamore; when, turning to Juliet with sudden and angry recollection, her smiles, gaiety, and capering gave way to a bitter fit of crying, and she exclaimed, "But if he is here, it will be nothing to me, I dare say, if Miss Ellis is here the while; for he won't look at me, almost, when she is by: will he? For some people play one so false, that one might as well be as ugly as the cat, almost, when they are in the way."

"Don't be fretted, Miss Flora," cried young Gooch, soothingly; "for I shall ask Miss Ellis to dance myself; for as I shall begin the hop, because of its being our own, I think I've a good right

to chuse my partner; so don't be fretted, so, Miss Flora, for you'll have the Baronight left to you whether he will or no! But come; don't let's lose time: if you'll follow me, you won't want sport, I can tell you; for the beginning's to be a syllabub under the cow."

Flora was not too proud to accept this consolation; but Juliet positively declared that she should not dance; and earnestly entreated that some one might be found to conduct her to Mrs. Pierson's.

Flora, recovering her spirits, with the hopes of getting rid of her rival, whispered, "If you're in real right earnest, Miss Ellis, and don't say you want to go, only to make a fool of me, which I shall take pretty unkind, I assure you; why I can shew you the way so as you can't miss it, if you'd never so. And I'm sure I shall be glad enough to have you go, if I must needs speak without a compliment. Only don't tell mamma who's here, for she don't like persons of

quality, she says, because of their bad designs; but I'm sure if she was to hear 'em talk as I do, she'd think quite another opinion: wouldn't she?"

Fortunately for the intentions of Juliet, which were instantly to make known to Mrs. Pierson the new danger of her daughter, Flora waited not for any answer to this injunction; but set out, prattling incessantly as they went on, to put the willing Juliet on her way to Lewes.

The cry, however, from young Gooch, of "Come! Where are the young ladies? The pig's ready!" caught the ears of Flora, with a charm not to be resisted; and, hastily pointing out a style, to pass into a meadow, and another, to pass thence to the high road, she capered briskly back; fearing to miss some of the sport, if not a seat next to the Baronet.

CHAPTER L.

JULIET, as earnest to avoid, as Flora felt eager to pursue, the opening feats, hurried from the destined spot, after charging the simple damsel not to make known her departure. Unavailing, however, was the caution; and immaterial alike the prudence or the indiscretion of Flora: Juliet had no sooner crossèd the first style, than she perceived Sir Lyell Sycamore sauntering in the meadow.

She would promptly have returned to the farm, but a shout of noisy merriment reached her ears from the company that she was quitting, and pointed out the danger of passing the evening in the midst of such turbulent and vulgar revelry. She hastened, therefore, on; but neither the lightness of her step, nor the swiftness of her speed, could save her

from the quick approach of the Baronet. "My angel!" he cried, "whither are you going? and why this prodigious haste? What is it my angel fears? Can she suppose me rascal enough, or fool enough, to make use of any violence? No, my angel, no! I only ask to be regaled, from your own sweet lips, with the delicious tale of divine partiality, that the quaint old knight began revealing. I sigh, I pant to hear confirmed——"

"Hold, Sir Lyell!" interrupted Juliet. "If Sir Jaspar is the author of this astonishing mistake, I trust he will have the honour to rectify it. When I named you to him, it was but with a view to rescue a credulous young creature from your pursuit, whom I feared it might injure; not to expose to it one whom it never can endanger; however deeply it may offend."

Struck and disappointed at the courage and coolness of this explanation, Sir Lyell looked mortified and amazed;

but, upon seeing her reach the style, he sprang over it, and, recovering his usual effrontery, offered her his hand.

Juliet knew not whether her risk were greater to proceed or to return; but while she hesitated, a phaeton, which was driving by, stopt, and an elderly lady, addressing the Baronet, in a tone of fawning courtesy, enquired after his health, and added, " So you are come to this famous junket, Sir Lyell?"

Sir Lyell forced a laugh, and bowed low; though he muttered, loud enough for Juliet to hear, " What cursed spies!"

Juliet now perceived Mrs. and Miss Brinville; and neither innocence, nor contempt of calumny, could suppress a rising blush, at being surprised, by persons already unfavourably disposed towards her, in a situation apparently so suspicious.

The countenance of the mother exhibited strong chagrin at sight of Juliet; while the daughter, in a tone of pique, said, " No doubt but you are well amused, Sir Lyell?"

They drove on; not, however, very fast, and with so little self-command, as frequently to allow themselves to look back. This indelicacy, however ill adapted to raise them in the esteem of the Baronet, at least rescued Juliet from his persecution. Disconcerted himself, he felt the necessity of decency; and, quitting her, with affected carelessness, he hummed an air, while grumbling curses, and, swinging his switch to and fro, walked off; not more careful that the ladies in the phaeton should see him depart, than assiduous to avoid with them any sort of junction.

The relief caused to Juliet by his retreat, was cruelly clouded by her terrour of the false suggestions to which this meeting made her liable. Neither mother nor daughter would believe it accidental; nor credit it to have been contrived without equal guilt in both parties Is there no end, then, she cried, to the evils of defenceless female youth? And, even where actual danger is escaped,

must slander lie in wait, to misconstrue the most simple actions, by surmising the most culpable designs?

Neither to follow the footsteps of Sir Lyell, nor to remain where he might return, she was going back to the farm; when she was met by Flora, who, with a species of hysterical laughter, nearly of kin to crying, called out, "So Ma'am! so Miss Ellis! I've caught you at last! I've surprised you at last! a-courting with my sweet-heart!"

Pitying her credulous ignorance, Juliet would have cleared up this mistake; but the petulant Flora would not listen. "I'll speak to the gentleman myself!" she cried, running forward to the style; "for I have found out your design; so it's of no use to deny it! I saw you together all the way I came; so you may as well not try to make a ninny of me, Miss Ellis, for it i'n't so easy!"

Catching a glimpse of the Baronet as he descended the road, she jumped over the style to run after him; but seeing

him look round, and, though he perceived her, quietly walk on, she stopt, crying bitterly: "Very well, Miss Ellis! very well! you've got your ends! I see that! and, I don't thank you for it, I assure you, for I liked him very well; and it i'n't so easy to find a man of quality every day; so it i'n't doing as you'd be done by; for nobody likes much to be forsaken, no more than I, I believe, for it i'n't so agreeable. And I had rather you had not served me so by half! In particular for a man of quality!"

Juliet, though vainly, was endeavouring to appease and console her, when a young lady, bending eagerly from the window of a post chaise which was passing by, ejaculated, "Ellis!" and Juliet, with extreme satisfaction, perceived Elinor.

The chaise stopt, and Juliet advanced to it with alacrity; but before she could speak, the impatient Elinor, still looking pale, meagre, and wretched, burst forth, with rapid and trembling energy, into a

string of disordered, incoherent, scarcely intelligible interrogatories. " Ellis! what brings you to this spot?—Whither is it you go?—What project are you forming?—What purpose are you fulfilling?—Whom are you flying—Whom are you following?—What is it you design?—What is it you wish?—Why are you here alone? — Where — Where—"

Leaning, then, still further out of the window, she fixed her nearly hagard, yet piercing eyes upon those of Juliet, and, in a hollow voice, dictatorially added: " Where—tell me, I charge you! where—is Harleigh?"

Consternation at sight of her altered countenance, and affright at the impetuosity of her questions, produced a hesitation in the answer of Juliet, that, to the agitated Elinor, seemed the effect of surprised guilt. Her pallid cheeks then burnt with the mixed feelings of triumph and indignation; yet her voice sought to disguise her wounded feelings,

and in subdued, though broken accents, " 'Tis well!" she cried, " You no longer, at least, seek to deceive me, and I thank you!" Deaf to explanation or representation, she then hurried her weak frame from the chaise, aided by her foreign lackey; and, directing Juliet to follow, crossed the road to a rising ground upon the Downs; seated herself; sent off her assistant, and made Juliet take a place by her side; while Flora returned, crying and alone, to the farm.

" Now, then," she said, " that you try no more to delude, to cajole, to blind me, tell me now, and in two words,— where is Harleigh?"

" Believe me, Madam,——" Juliet was tremblingly beginning, when Elinor, casting off the little she had assumed of self-command, passionately, cried, " Must I again be played upon by freezing caution and duplicity? Must I die without end the lingering death of cold inaction and uncertainty? breathe for ever without living? Where, I demand, is Har-

leigh? Where have you concealed him? Why will Harleigh, the noble Harleigh, degrade himself by any concealment? Why stoop to the subtilty of circumspection, to spare himself the appearance of destroying one whose head, heart, and vitals, all feel the reality of the destruction he inflicts? And yet not he! No, no! 'tis my own ruthless star! He loves me not! he is not responsible for my misery, though he is master of my fate! Where is he? where is he? You,—who are the tyrant of his! tell me, and at once!"

"I solemnly protest to you, Madam, with the singleness of the most scrupulous truth," cried Juliet, recovering her presence of mind, "I am entirely ignorant of his abode, his occupations, and his intentions." Ah why, she secretly added, am I not equally unacquainted with his feelings and his wishes!

Unable to discredit the candour with which this was pronounced, and filled with wonder, yet involuntarily consoled,

the features of Elinor lost their rigidity, and her eyes their fierceness; and, in milder accents, she replied, " Strange! how strange! Where, then, can he be? — with whom? — how employed? — Does he fly the whole world as well as Elinor? Has no one his society? — no one his confidence? —his society, which, by contrast, makes all existence without it disgusting! — his confidence, which, to obtain, I would yet live, though doomed daily to the rack! O Harleigh! love like mine, who has felt? —love like mine, who but you, O matchless Harleigh! ever inspired!"

Tears now gushed into her eyes. Ashamed, and angry with herself, she hastily brushed them off with the back of her hand, and, with forced vivacity, continued, " He thinks, perchance, to sicken me into the pining end of a love-sick consumption? to avert the kindly bowl or dagger, that cut short human misery, for the languors, the sufferings, and despair of a loathsome natural death?

And for what? — to restore, to preserve me? No! I have no share in the arrangement; no interest, no advantage from the plan. Appearances alone are considered; all else is regarded as immaterial; or sacrificed. And he, Harleigh, the noblest, — the only noble of men! — can level himself with the narrowest and most illiberal of his race, to pay coward obeisance to appearances!"

Again she then repeated her personal interrogatories to Juliet; and demanded whether she should set off immediately for Gretna Green, with Lord Melbury; or whether she must wait till he should be of age.

"Neither!" Juliet solemnly answered; and frankly recounted her recent difficulties; and entreated the advice of Elinor for adopting another plan of life.

Elinor, interrupting her, said, "Nay, 'twas your own choice, you know, to live in a garret, and hem pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Choice, Madam! Alas! deprived of all but personal resource, I fixed upon

a mode of life that promised me, at least, my mental freedom. I was not then aware how imaginary is the independence, that hangs for support upon the uncertain fruits of daily exertions! Independent, indeed, such situations may be deemed from the oppressions of power, or the tyrannies of caprice and ill humour; but the difficulty of obtaining employment, the irregularity of pay, the dread of want,—ah! what is freedom but a name, for those who have not an hour at command from the subjection of fearful penury and distress?"

"If all this is so," said Elinor, "which, unless you wait for Lord Melbury's majority, is more than incomprehensible; what say you, now, to an asylum safe, at least, from torments of this sort;—will you commission me, at length, to apply to Mrs. Ireton?"

Juliet, instinctively, recoiled at the very name of that lady; yet a little reflection upon the dangers to which she was

now exposed, through unprotected poverty; through the lawless pursuit of Sir Lyell Sycamore; and the vindictive calumnies of the Brinvilles, made the wish of solid safety repress the disgusts of offended sensibility; and, after a painful pause, she recommended herself to the support of Elinor: resolving to accept, for the moment, any proposition, that might secure her an honourable refuge from want and misconception.

Elinor, looking at her suspiciously, said, "And Harleigh?—Will he let you submit to such slavery?"

Mr. Harleigh, Juliet protested, could have no influence upon her determination.

"But you yourself, who a month or two ago, could so ill bear her tauntings, how is it you are thus suddenly endued with so much humility?"

"Alas, Madam, all choice, all taste, all obstacles sink before necessity! When I came over, I had expectations of immediate succour. I knew not that

the friend I sought was herself ruined, as well as unhappy! I had hopes, too, of speedy intelligence that might have liberated me from all my difficulties. . ."

She stopt; Elinor exclaimed, "From whence?—From abroad?—"

Juliet was silent; and Elinor, after a few passing sallies against secrets and mystery, sarcastically bid her consider, before she adopted this new scheme, that Harleigh never visited at Mrs. Ireton's; having taken, in equal portions, a dose of aversion for the mother, and of contempt for the son.

Juliet calmly replied, that such a circumstance could be but an additional motive to seek the situation; and, hopeless, for the moment, of doing better, seriously begged that proper measures might be taken to accelerate the plan.

Elinor, now, from mingled wonder, satisfaction, and scorn, recovered all her wonted vivacity. "You are really, and *bona fide*, contented, then," she cried, "to be shut up as completely from Harleigh, through his horrour of that wo-

woman's irascible temper, as if you were separated by bolts, bars, dungeons, towers, and bastilles? I applaud your taste, and wish you the full enjoyment of its fruits! Yet what materials you can be made of, to see the first of men at your feet, and voluntarily to fly him, to be trampled under by those of the most odious of women, I cannot divine! 'Tis an exuberance of apathy that surpasses my comprehension. And can He, the spirited Harleigh, love, adore, such a composition of ice, of snow, of marble?"

She could not, however, disguise the elation with which she looked forward, to depositing Juliet where information might constantly be procured of her visitors and her actions. They went together to the carriage; and Elinor conveyed her submissive and contemned, yet agonizingly envied rival, to Brighthelmstone.

In her usually unguarded manner, Elinor, by the way, communicated the

various, but successless efforts by which she had endeavoured to gain intelligence whither Harleigh had rambled. "If I pursued him," she cried, "with the vanity of hope; or with the meanness of flattery, he would do well to shun me; but the pure-minded Harleigh is capable of believing, that the moment is over for Elinor to desire to be his! And, to sustain at once and shew my principles, I never seek his sight, but in presence of her who has blasted even my wishes! Else, thus clamourously to invoke, thus pertinaciously to follow him, might, indeed, merit avoidance. But Elinor, now, would be as superiour to accepting, . . . as she is to forgetting him!"

"Yet his obdurate seclusion," she continued, "is the only mark I receive, that I escape his disdain. It shews me that he fears the event of a meeting. He does not, therefore, utterly deride the pusillanimity of my abortive attempt. O could I justify his good opinion! — All others, I doubt

not, insult me by the most ludicrous suspicions; they are welcome. They judge me by their little-minded selves. But thou, O Harleigh! could I see thee once more!—in thy sight, thy loved sight, could I sink, at last, my sorrows and my disgrace to rest! to oblivion, to sleep eternal!"—

Vainly Juliet essayed to plead the cause of religion, and the duties of life; unanswered, unmarked, unheard, she talked but to the air. All that was uttered in return, began and ended alike with Harleigh, death, and annihilation.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER LI.

JULIET could not but be gratified by a circumstance so important to her reputation, with the Brinvilles, and with those among the inhabitants of Brighthelmstone to whom she was known, as that of being brought home by Miss Joddrel, after an adventure that must unavoidably raise curiosity, and that threatened to excite slander. For with however just a pride wronged innocence may disdain injurious aspersions, female fame, like the wife of Cæsar, ought never to be suspected.

The celerity of the motions of Elinor, nearly equalled the quickness of her ideas. Her lackey arrived the next morning, to help to convey Juliet, and her baggage, immediately to the dwell-

ing of Mrs. Ireton; with a note from his mistress, indicating that Mrs. Ireton was already prepared to take her for a companion. " An humble companion," Elinor wrote, " I need not add; I had nearly said a pitiful one; for who would voluntarily live with such an antidote to all the comforts of life, that has spirit, sense, or soul? O envied Ellis! how potent must be the passion, the infatuation, that can make Harleigh view such meanness as grace, and adore it as dignity!—O icy Ellis!—but the human heart would want strength to support such pre-eminent honour, were it bestowed upon a mind gifted for its appreciation!"

Then again, wishing her joy of her taste, she assured her that it was reciprocated; for Mrs. Ireton was all impatience to display, to a new dependent, her fortune, her power, and her magnificence.

Juliet, with her answer of thanks for this service, wrote a few lines for Mrs. Pierson, which she begged the

messenger to deliver. They were to warn the imprudent, or deceived mother of the dangerous state of mind in which her daughter still continued; and to give her notice that Sir Lyell Sycamore, who could not be guarded against too carefully, was still in the neighbourhood.

With a mind revolting from a measure which, while prudence, if not necessity, dictated, choice and feeling opposed, she now quitted her mantua-maker's abode, to set out for her new destination; seeking to cheer herself that, at least, by this step, she should be secured from the licentious pursuit of Sir Lyell Sycamore; the envenomed shafts of calumny of the enraged Brinvilles; the perpetual terrour of debts; and the cruel apprehension of want.

She had not far to go; but the mortifications, for which she prepared herself, began by the very sight of the dwelling into which she was to enter. Mrs. Ireton had taken the house of Mrs. Howel:—that house in which Juliet had first, after her arrival in England, received

consolation in her distresses; been melted by kindness; or animated by approbation. There, too, indeed, she had experienced the pain which she had felt the most severely; for there all the soothing consideration, so precious to her sorrows, had abruptly been broken off, to give place to an assault the most shocking upon her intentions, her probity, her character.

Here, too, she had suffered the cruel affront, and heart-felt grief, of seeing the ingenuous, amiable Lord Melbury forget what was due to the rights of hospitality; to his own character; and to the respect due to his sister: and here she had witnessed his sincere and candid repentance; here had been softened, touched, and penetrated by the impressive anguish of his humiliation.

These remembrances, and the various affecting and interesting ideas by which they were accompanied, gave a dejection to her thoughts, and a sadness to her air, that would have awakened an interest

in her favour, in any one whose heart had been open to the feelings of others: but the person under whose protection she was now to place herself, was a stranger to every species of sensation that was not personal. And where the calls of self upon sensibility are unremitting, what must be the stock that will gift us, also, with supply sufficient for our fellow-creatures?

She found Mrs. Ireton reclining upon a sofa; at the side of which, upon a green velvet cushion, lay a tiny old lap dog, whom a little boy, evidently too wanton to find pleasure but in mischief, was secretly tormenting, by displaying before him the breast bone of a chicken, which he had snatched from the platter of the animal; and which, the moment that he made it touch the mouth of the cur, he hid, with all its fat and its grease, in his own waistcoat pocket.

Near to these two almost equally indulged and spoilt animals, stood a nursery maid, with a duster and an hearth-

broom in her hands, who was evidently incensed beyond her pittance of patience, from clearing away, repeatedly, their joint litter and dirt.

Scared, and keeping humbly aloof, near a window frame, stood, also, a little girl, of ten or twelve years of age, who, as Juliet afterwards heard from the angry nursery maid, was an orphan, that had been put to a charity school by Mrs. Ireton, as her particular *protegée ;* and who was now, for the eighth time, by the direction of her governess, come to solicit the arrears due from the very beginning of her school instruction.

Yet another trembler, though not one equally, at this moment, to be pitied, held the handle of the lock of the door ; not having received intelligible orders to advance, or to depart. This was a young negro, who was the favourite, because the most submissive servant of Mrs. Ireton ; and whose trembling was simply from the fear that his lady might remark a grin which he could not re-

press, as he looked at the child and the dog.

Mrs. Ireton herself, though her restless eye roved incessantly from object to object, in search of various food for her spleen, was ostensibly occupied in examining, and decrying, the goods of a Mercer; but when Juliet, finding herself unnoticed, was retreating, she called out, "O, you are there, are you? I did not see you, I protest. But come this way, if you please. I can't possibly speak so far off."

The authoritative tone in which this was uttered, joined to what Juliet observed of the general tyranny exercised around her, intimidated and shocked her; and she stood still, and nearly confounded.

Mrs. Ireton, holding her hand above her eyes, as if to aid her sight, and stretching forward her head, said, "Who is that?—pray who's there?—I imagined it had been a person I had sent for; but I must certainly be mistaken,

as she does not come to me. Pray has any body here a spying glass? I really can't see so far off. I beg pardon for having such bad eyes! I hope you'll forgive it. Let me know, however, who it is, I beg."

Juliet tried to speak, but felt so confused and disturbed what to answer, that she could not clearly articulate a word.

"You won't tell me, then?" continued Mrs. Ireton, lowering her voice nearly to a whisper," or is it that I am not heard? Has any body got a speaking trumpet? or do you think my lungs so capacious and powerful, that they may take its place?"

Juliet, now, though most unwillingly, moved forward; and Mrs. Ireton, surveying her, said, "Yes, yes, I see who you are! I recollect you now, Mrs. . . . Mrs. . . . I forget your name, though, I protest. I can't recollect your name, I own. I'm quite ashamed, but I really cannot call it to mind. I must beg a

little help. What is it? What is your name, Mrs. . . . Mrs. . . . Hay ? — Mrs. . . . What ?"

Colouring and stammering, Juliet answered, that she had hoped Miss Joddrel would have saved her this explanation, by mentioning that she was called Miss Ellis.

"Called ?" repeated Mrs. Ireton; "what do you mean by called ? — who calls you ? — What are you called for ? — Why do you wait to be called ? — And where are you called from ?"

The entire silence of Juliet to these interrogatories, gave a moment to the mercer to ask for orders.

"You are in haste, Sir, are you ?" said Mrs. Ireton; "I have your pardon to beg, too, have I ? I am really very unfortunate this morning. However, pray take your things away, Sir, if it's so immensely troublesome to you to exhibit them. Only be so good as to acquaint your chief, whoever he may be, that you had not time to wait for me to make any purchase."

The man offered the humblest apologies, which were all disdained; and self-defending excuses, which were all retorted; he was peremptorily ordered to be gone; with an assurance that he should answer for his disrespect to his master; who, she flattered herself, would give him a lesson of better behaviour, by the loss of his employment.

Harassed with apprehension of what she had to expect in this new residence, Juliet would silently have followed him.

"Stay, Ma'am, stay!" cried Mrs. Ireton; "give me leave to ask one question:—whither are you going, Mrs. . . . what's your name?"

"I . . . I feared, Madam, that I had come too soon."

"O, that's it, is it? I have not paid you sufficient attention, perhaps?—Nay it's very likely. I did not run up to receive you, I confess. I did not open my arms to embrace you, I own! It was very wrong of me, certainly. But I am apt to forget myself. I want a

flapper prodigiously. I know nothing of life,—nothing of manners. Perhaps you will be so good as to become my monitress? 'Twill be vastly kind of you. And who knows but, in time, you may form me? How happy it will be if you can make something of me!"

The maid, now, tired of wiping up splash after splash, and rubbing out spot after spot; finding her work always renewed by the mischievous little boy, was sullenly walking to the other end of the room.

"O, you're departing too, are you?" said Mrs. Ireton; "and pray who dismissed you? whose commands have you for going? Inform me, I beg, who it is that is so kind as to take the trouble off my hands, of ordering my servants? I ought at least to make them my humble acknowledgements. There's nothing so frightful as ingratitude."

The maid, not comprehending this irony, grumblingly answered, that she had wiped up the grease and the slops

till her arms ached; for the little boy made more dirt and nastiness than the cur himself.

"The boy?—The cur?—What's all this?" cried Mrs. Ireton; "who, and what, is the woman talking of? The boy? Has the boy no name?—The cur? Have you no more respect for your lady's lap dog?—Grease too?—Nastiness!—you turn me sick! I am ready to faint! What horrible images you present to me! Has nobody any salts? any lavendar-water? How unfortunate it is to have such nerves, such sensations, when one lives with such mere speaking machines!"

She then cast around her eyes, with a look of silent, but pathetic appeal to the sensibility of all who were within sight, against this unheard of indignity; but her speech was soon restored, from mingled wrath and surprise, upon perceiving her favourite young negro nearly suffocating with stifled laughter, though thrusting both his knuckles into his ca-

pacious mouth, to prevent its loud explosion.

"So this amuses you, does it, Sir? You think it very comical? You are so kind as to be entertained, are you? How happy I am to give you so much pleasure! How proud I ought to be to afford you such diversion! I shall make it my business to shew my sense of my good fortune; and, to give you a proof, Sir, of my desire to contribute to your gaiety, to-morrow morning I will have you shipped back to the West Indies. And there, that your joy may be complete, I shall issue orders that you may be striped till you jump, and that you may jump, —you little black imp!—between every stripe!"

The foolish mirth of poor Mungo was now converted into the fearfulest dismay. He dropt upon his knees to implore forgiveness; but he was peremptorily ordered to depart, with an assurance that he should keep up his fine spirits upon bread and water for a fortnight.

If disgust, now, was painted upon every feature of the face of Juliet, at this mixture of forced derision with but too natural inhumanity, the feeling which excited that expression was by no means softened, by seeing Mrs. Ireton turn next to the timid young orphan, imperiously saying, "And you, Ma'am, what may you stand there for, with your hands before you? Have you nothing better to do with them? Can't you find out some way to make them more useful? or do you hold it more fitting to consider them as only ornamental? They are very pretty, to be sure. I say nothing to the contrary of that. But I should suppose you don't quite intend to reserve them for mere objects of admiration? You don't absolutely mean, I presume, to devote them to the painter's eye? or to destine them to the sculptor's chisel? I should think not, at least. I should imagine not. I beg you to set me right if I am wrong."

The poor little girl, staring, and look-

ing every way around to find some meaning for what she did not comprehend, could only utter a faint "Ma'am!" in a tone of so much fear and distress, that Juliet, unable, silently, to witness oppression so wanton, came forward to say, "The poor child, Ma'am, only wishes to understand your commands, that she may obey them."

"O! they are not clear, I suppose? They are too abstruse, I imagine?" contemptuously replied Mrs. Ireton. "And you, who are kind enough to offer yourself for my companion; who think yourself sufficiently accomplished to amuse,—perhaps instruct me,—you, also, have not the wit to find out, what a little chit of an ordinary girl can do better with her hands, than to stand still, pulling her own fingers?"

Juliet, now, believing that she had discovered what was meant, kindly took the little girl by the arm, and pointed to the just overturned water-bason of the dog.

"But I don't know where to get a cloth, Ma'am?" said the child.

"A cloth?—In my wardrobe, to be sure!" cried Mrs. Ireton; "amongst my gowns, and caps, and hats. Where else should there be dirty cloths, and dusters, and dish-clouts? Do you know of any other place where they are likely to be found? Why don't you answer?"

"Ma'am?"

"You never heard, perhaps, of such a place as a kitchen? You don't know where it is? nor what it means? You have only heard talk of drawing-rooms, dressing-rooms, boudoirs? or, perhaps, sometimes, of a corridor, or a vestibule, or an anti-chamber? But nothing beyond!—A kitchen!—O, fie, fie!"

Juliet now hurried the little girl away, to demand a cloth of the house-maid; but the moment that she returned with it, Mrs. Ireton called out, "And what would you do, now, Ma'am? Make yourself all dirt and filth, that

you may go back to your school, to shew the delicate state of my house? To make your mistress, and all her brats, believe that I live in a pig-stie? Or to spread abroad that I have not servants enough to do my work, and that I seize upon you to supply their place? But I beg your pardon; perhaps that may be your way to shew your gratitude? To manifest your sense of my saving you from the work-house? to reward me for snatching you from beggary, and want, and starving?"

The poor little girl burst into tears, but courtsied, and quitted the room; while Mrs. Ireton called after her, to desire that she would acquaint her governess, that she should certainly be paid the following week.

Juliet now stood in scarcely less dismay than she had been witnessing all around her; panic-struck to find herself in the power of a person whose character was so wantonly tyrannic and irascible.

The fortunate entrance of some company enabled her, for the present, to retreat; and to demand, of one of the servants, the way to her chamber.

CHAPTER LII.

FROM the heightened disgust which she now conceived against her new patroness, Juliet severely repented the step that she had taken. And if her entrance into the family contributed so little to her contentment, her subsequent introduction into her office was still less calculated to exhilarate her spirits. Her baggage was scarcely deposited in a handsome chamber, of which the hangings, and decorations, as of every part of the mansion, were sumptuous for the spectator; but in which there was a dearth of almost every thing that constitutes comfort to the immediate dweller; ere she was summoned back, by a hasty order to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Ireton, who was reading a newspaper, did not, for some time, raise her head; though a glance of her eye pro-

cured her the satisfaction of seeing that her call had been obeyed. Juliet, at first, stood modestly waiting for commands; but, receiving none, sat down, though at an humble distance; determined to abide by the consequences, be they what they might, of considering herself as, at least, above a common domestic.

This action shortened the term of neglect; Mrs. Ireton, letting the newspaper fall, exclaimed, in a tone of affected alarm, "Are you ill, Ma'am? Are you disordered? I hope you are not subject to fits?"

Juliet coldly answered No.

"I am very glad to hear it, indeed! Very happy, upon my word! I was afraid you were going to faint away! But I find that you are only delicate; only fatigued by descending the stairs. I ought, indeed, to have sent somebody to help you; somebody you could have leant upon as you came along. I was very stupid not to think of that. I hope you'll pardon me?"

Juliet looked down, but kept her place.

Mrs. Ireton, a little nettled, was silent a few minutes, and then said, "Pray,—if I may ask,—if it will not be too great a liberty to ask,—what have been your pursuits since I had the honour of accompanying you to London? How have you passed your time? I hope you have found something to amuse you?"

Juliet sighed a negative.

"You have been studying the fine arts, I am told. Painting?—Drawing?—Sculpture?—or what is it?—Something of that sort, I am informed. Pray what is it, Mrs. Thing-a-mi?—I am always forgetting your name. Yet you have certainly a name; but I don't know how it is, I can never remember it. I believe I must beg you to write it down."

Juliet again only sighed.

"Perhaps I am making a mistake as to your occupations? Very likely I may be quite in the wrong? Indeed I

think I recollect, now, what it is you have been doing. Acting?—That's it. Is it not? Pray what stage did you come out upon first? Did you begin wearing your itinerant buskins in England, or abroad?"

"Where I began, Madam, I have ended; at Mrs. Maple's."

"And pray, have you kept that same face ever since I saw you in Grosvenor Square? or have you put it on again only now, to come back to me? I rather suppose you have made it last the whole time. It would be very expensive, I apprehend, to change it frequently: it can by no means be so costly to keep it only in repair. How do you put on your colours? I have heard of somebody who had learnt the art of enamelling their own skin: is that your method?"

Waiting vainly for an answer, she went on.

"Pray, if I may presume so far, how old are you?—But I beg pardon for so indiscreet a question. I did not reflect

upon what I was saying. Very possibly your age may be indefinable. You may be a person of another century. A wandering Jewess. I never heard that the old Jew had a wife, or a mother, who partook of his longevity; but very likely I may now have the pleasure of seeing one of his family under my own roof? That red and white, that you lay on so happily, may just as well hide the wrinkles of two or three grand climacterics, as of only a poor single sixty or seventy years of age. However, these are secrets that I don't presume to enquire into. Every trade has its mystery."

These splenetic witticisms producing no reply, Mrs. Ireton, more categorically, demanded, "Pray, Ma'am, pray Mrs. What's-your-name, will you give me leave to ask what brings you to my house?"

"Miss Joddrel, Madam, informed me that you desired my attendance."

"Yes; but with what view?"

Disconcerted by this interrogatory, Juliet stammered, but could devise no answer.

"To what end, what purpose, what intent, I say, may I owe the honour of your presence?"

The office pointed out by Elinor, of an humble companion, now died the cheeks of Juliet with shame; but resentment of the palpable desire to hear its mortifying acknowledgement, tied her tongue; and though each of the following interrogatories was succeeded by a pause that demanded a reply, she could not bring herself to utter a word.

"You are hardly come, I should imagine, without some motive: I may be mistaken, to be sure; but I should hardly imagine you would take the trouble to present yourself, merely to afford me the pleasure of seeing you? — Not but that I ought to be extremely flattered by such a compliment. 'Twould be vastly amiable, certainly. A lady of your indescribable consequence!

'Twould be difficult to me to shew an adequate sense of so high an honour. I am distressed at the very thought of it.— But perhaps you may have some other design?—You may have the generosity to intend me some improvement?—You may come to favour me with some lessons of declamation?—Who knows but you may propose to make an actress of me?—Or perhaps to instruct me how to become an adept in your own favourite art of face-daubing?"

At least, thought Juliet, I need not give you any lessons in the *art of ingeniously tormenting!* There you are perfect!

"What! no answer yet?—Am I always so unfortunate as to hit upon improper subjects?—To ask questions that merit no reply?—I am quite confounded at my want of judgment! Excuse it, I entreat, and aid me out of this unprofitable labyrinth of conjecture, by telling me, at once, to what happy inspiration I am indebted for the pleasure of receiving you in my house?"

Juliet pleaded again the directions of Miss Joddrel.

"Miss Joddrel told you to come, then, only to come?—Only to shew yourself?—Well, you are worth looking at, I acknowledge, to those who have seen you formerly. The transformation must always be curious: I only hope you intend to renew it, from time to time, to keep admiration alive? That pretty face you exhibit at present, may lose its charms, if it should become familiar. When shall you put on the other again, that I had the pleasure to see you in first?"

Fatigued and spiritless, Juliet would have retired; but Mrs. Ireton called after her, "O! you are going, are you? Pray may I take the liberty to ask whither?"

Again Juliet was silent.

"You mean perhaps to repose yourself?—or, may be, to pursue your studies?—or, perhaps, you may have some visits upon your hands?—And you may only have done me the favour to

enter my house to find time to follow your humour? — You may think it sufficient honour for me, that I may be at the expence of your board, and find you in lodging, and furniture, and fire, and candles, and servants? — you may hold this ample recompense for such an insignificant person as I am? I ought to be much obliged to Miss Joddrel, upon my word, for bringing me into such distinction! I had understood her, indeed, that you would come to me as my humble companion."

Juliet, cruelly shocked, turned away her head.

"And I was stupid enough to suppose, that that meant a person who could be of some use, and some agreeability; a person who could read to me when I was tired, and who, when I had nobody else, could talk to me; and find out a thousand little things for me all day long; coming and going; prating, or holding her tongue; doing every thing she was bid; and keeping always at hand."

Juliet, colouring at this true, however insulting description of what she had undertaken, secretly revolved in her mind, how to renounce, at once, an office which seemed to invite mortification, and license sarcasm.

"But I perceive I was mistaken! I perceive I knew nothing of the matter! It only means a fine lady! a lady that's so delicate it fatigues her to walk down stairs; a lady who is so independent, that she retires to her room at pleasure; a lady who disdains to speak but when she is disposed, for her own satisfaction, to talk; a lady——"

"A lady who, indeed, Madam," said the tired Juliet, "weighed too little what she attempted, when she hoped to find means of obtaining your favour; but who now sees her errour, and entreats at once your pardon and dismission."

She then courtsied respectfully, but, though called back even with vehemence, steadily left the room.

Not, however, with triumph did she return to her own. The justice of the sensibility which urged her retreat, could not obviate its imprudence, or avert its consequences. She was wholly without friends, without money, without protection, without succour; and the horrour of a licentious pursuit, and the mischiefs menaced by calumniating ill wishers, still made a lonely residence as unsafe as when her first terrour drove her to acquiesce in the proposition of Elinor. Yet, though she could not exult, she could not repent: how desire, how even support a situation so sordid? a situation not only distressing, but oppressive; not merely cruel, but degrading.

She was preparing, therefore, for immediate departure, when she was stopt by a footman, who informed her that Mrs. Ireton demanded to see her without delay.

The expectation of reproach made her hesitate whether to obey this order; but a desire not to have the air of merit-

ing it, by the defiance of a refusal, led her again to the dressing-room.

Here, however, to her great surprise, instead of the haughty or taunting upbraidings for which she was prepared, she was received with a gracious inclination of the head; while the footman was told to give her a chair.

Mrs. Ireton, then, fixing her eyes upon a pamphlet which she held in her hand; that she might avoid taking any notice of the stiff and decided air with which Juliet stood still, though amazed, said, "My bookseller has just sent me something to look at, which may serve for a beginning of our readings."

Juliet now saw, that, however imperiously she had been treated, Mrs. Ireton had no intention to part with her. She saw, too, that that lady was amongst the many, though terrible characters, who think superiour rank or fortune authorises perverseness, and legitimates arrogance; who hold the display of ill humour to be the display

and mark of power; and who set no other boundary to their pleasure in the art of tormenting, than that which, if passed, might endanger their losing its object. She wished, more than ever, to avoid all connexion with a nature so wilfully tyrannic; but Mrs. Ireton, who read in her dignified demeanour, that a spirit was awakened which threatened the escape of her prey, determined to shun any discussion. Suddenly, therefore, rising, and violently ringing the bell, she exclaimed, " I dare say those fools have not placed half the things you want in your chamber; but I shall make Whitly see immediately that all is arranged as it ought to be."

She then gave some parading directions, that Miss Ellis should want for nothing; and, affecting not to perceive the palpable design of Juliet to decline these tardy attentions, graciously nodded her head, and passed into another room.

Juliet, not absolutely softened, yet

somewhat appeased, again hesitated. A road seemed open, by some exertion of spirit, for obtaining better treatment; and however ungenial to her feelings was a character whose humours submitted to no restraint, save to ensure their own lengthened indulgence, still, in appearing more contemptible, it became less tremendous.

She began, also, to see her office as less debasing. Why, she cried, should I exaggerate my torments, by blindly giving into received opinions, without examining whether here, as in all things else, there may not be exceptions to general rules? A sycophant must always be despicable; a parasite must eternally deserve scorn; but may there not be a possibility of uniting the affluent with the necessitous upon more equitable terms? May not some medium be hit upon, between oppression on one side, and servility on the other? If we are not worthless because indigent, why conclude ourselves abject because de-

pendent? Happiness, indeed, dwells not with undue subordination; but the exertion of talents in our own service can never in itself be vile. It can only become so, where it is mingled and contaminated with flattery, with unfitting obsequiousness, and unworthy submissions. They who simply repay being sustained and protected, by a desire to please, a readiness to serve, a wish to instruct; without falsehood in their counsels, without adulation in their civilities, without meanness in their manners and conduct; have at least as just a claim to respect and consideration, for their services and their labours, as those who, merely through pecuniary retribution, reap their fruits.

This idea better reconciled her with her condition; and she blessed her happy acquaintance with Mr. Giles Arbe, which had strengthened her naturally philosophical turn of mind, by leading her to this simple, yet useful style of reasoning.

The rest of the day was propitious to her new views. The storms with which it had begun subsided, and a calm ensued, in which Mrs. Ireton set apart her querulous irascibility, and forbore her contemptuous interrogatories.

The servants were ordered not to neglect Miss Ellis; and Miss Ellis received permission to carry to her own apartment, any books from off the piano forte or tables, that might contribute to her amusement.

Juliet was not of a character to take advantage of a moment of concession, even in an enemy. The high and grave deportment, therefore, which had thus happily raised alarm, had no sooner answered its purpose, than she suffered it to give place to an air of gentleness, more congenial to her native feelings: and, the next morning, subduing her resentment, and submitting, with the best grace in her power, to the business of her office, she cheerfully proposed reading; complied with the first request

that was made her to play upon the piano-forte and the harp; and even, to sing; though, not so promptly; for her voice and sensibility were less ductile than her manners. But she determined to leave nothing untried, that could prove, that it was not more easy to stimulate her pride by indignity, than to animate her desire to oblige by mild usage.

This resolution on her part, which the fear of losing her, on that of Mrs. Ireton, gave time to operate, brought into play so many brilliant accomplishments, and opened to her patroness such sources of amusement, that, while Juliet began to hope she had found a situation which she might sustain till her suspences should be over, Mrs. Ireton conceived that she had met with a treasure, which might rescue her unoccupied hours from weariness and spleen.

CHAPTER LIII.

THIS delusion, unfortunately, was not of long duration on either side. Mrs. Ireton no sooner observed that Juliet appeared to be settled, than all zest for detaining her ceased; no sooner became accustomed to hearing at will the harp, or the piano-forte, than she found something to say, or to do, that interrupted the performance every four or five bars; and had no sooner secured a reader whose voice she could command at pleasure, than she either quarrelled with every book that was begun; or yawned, or fondled and talked aloud to her little lap dog, during the whole time that any work was read.

This quick abatement in the power of pleasing, was supported by Juliet with indifference rather than philosophy. Where interest alone is concerned, dis-

appointment is rarely heavy with the young and generous. Age, or misfortune, must teach the value of pecuniary considerations, to give them force. Yet, though no tender affections, no cherished hopes, no favourite feelings were in the power of Mrs. Ireton, every moment of time, and consequently all means of comfort, were at her disposal. Juliet languished, therefore, though she would not repine; and though she was not afflicted at heart, she sickened with disgust.

The urgency of finding security from immediate insult and want, induced her, nevertheless, to persevere in her fortitude for supporting, and her efforts for ameliorating her situation. But, the novelty over, all labour was vain, all success was at an end; and, in a very short time, she would have contributed no more to the expulsion of spleen, than any other inmate of the house; had not her superiour acquirements opened a more extensive field for the exercise of tyranny and

caprice. And in that exercise alone, Juliet soon saw, consisted every sensation of pleasure of which Mrs. Ireton was susceptible.

Of the many new tasks of Juliet, that which she found the most severe, was inventing amusement for another while sad and dispirited herself. It was her duty to be always at hand, early or late; it was her business to furnish entertainment, whether sick or well. Success, therefore, was unacknowledged, though failure was resented. There was no relaxation to her toil, no rest for her person, no recruit for her spirits. From her sleep alone she could purloin the few minutes that she dedicated to her pen and her Gabriella.

If a new novel excited interest, or a political pamphlet awakened curiosity, she was called upon to read whole hours, nay, whole days, without intermission; even a near extinction of voice did not authorize so great a liberty as that of requesting a few minutes for rest. Mrs. Ireton, who regarded all the world as

robust, compared with herself, deemed it an impertinent rivalry of a delicacy which she held to be unexampled, ever to pronounce the word fatigue, ever to heave a sigh of lassitude, or ever even to allude to that part of the human frame which is called nerves, unless with some pointed reference to herself.

With the same despotic hardness, she ordered Juliet to the harp, or piano-forte, and made her play though she were suffering from the acutest head-ache; and sing when hoarse and short-breathed from the most violent cold. Yet these commands, however arbitrary and unfeeling, were more supportable than those with which, after every other source of tyrannic authority had been drained, the day was ordinarily concluded. Mrs. Ireton, at the hour of retiring, when weary alike of books and of music, listless, fretful, captious; too sleepy for any exertion, yet too wakeful or uneasy for repose; constantly brought forward the same enquiries

which had so often been urged and repelled, in the week that they had spent together upon their arrival from France; repeated the same sneers, revived the same suspicions, and recurred to the same rude interrogatories or offensive insinuations.

At meals, the humble companion was always helped last; even when there were gentlemen, even when there were children at the table; and always to what was worst; to what was rejected, as ill-cooked, or left, as spoilt and bad. No question was ever asked of what she chose or what she disliked. Sometimes she was even utterly forgotten; and, as no one ventured to remind Mrs. Ireton of any omission, her helpless *protegée*, upon such occasions, rose half famished from the inhospitable board.

Upon the entrance of any visitors, not satisfied to let the humble companion glide gently away, the haughty patroness called out, in a tone of command, "You may go to your room now: I shall send for you when I am at leisure."

Or, " You may stand at the window if you will. You won't be in the way, I believe; and I shall want you presently."

Or, if she feared that any one of the party had failed to remark this augmentation of her household and of her power, she would retard the willing departure by some frivolous and vexatious commission; as, " Stop, Miss Ellis; do pray tie this string a little tighter." Or, " Draw up my gloves a little higher: but be so good as not to pinch me; unless you have a particular fancy for it!"

If, drily, though respectfully, Juliet ever proposed to wait in her own room, the answer was, " In your own room? O, — ay — well, — that may be better! I beg your pardon for having proposed that you should wait in one of mine! I beg your pardon a thousand times! I really did not think of what I was saying! I hope you'll forgive my inattention!"

When then, silently, and with difficulty forbearing from shrugging her shoulders, Juliet walked away, she was again stopt by, "One moment, Miss Ellis! if it won't be requesting too great a favour. Pray, when I want you, where may I hear of your servants? For to be sure you don't mean that mine should scamper up and down all day long for you? You cannot mean that. You must have a lackey of your own, no doubt: some page, or spruce foot-boy at your command, to run upon your errands: only pray let some of my people know where he may be met with."

But if, when the purpose was answered of drawing the attention of her guests upon her new dependent, that attention were followed by any looks of approbation, or marks of civility, she hastily exclaimed, "O, pray don't disturb yourself, Sir!" or "Ma'am! 'tis only a young woman I have engaged to read to me; — a young person whom I have taken into my house out of com-

passion." And then, affably nodding, she would affect to be suddenly struck with something which she had already repeatedly seen, and cry, "Well, I declare, that gown is not ugly, Miss Ellis! How did you come by it?" or, "That ribbon's pretty enough: who gave it you?"

Ah, thought Juliet, 'tis conduct such as this that makes inequality of fortune baleful! Where superiour wealth falls into liberal hands,—where its possessor is an Aurora Granville, it proves a good still more to the surrounders than to the owners; "it blesses those that give, and those that take."—But Oh! where it is misused for the purposes of bowing down the indigent, of oppressing the helpless, of triumphing over the dependent,—then, how baneful then is inequality of fortune!

With these thoughts, and deeply hurt, she was twenty times upon the point of retiring, during the first week of her distasteful office; but the sameness

of the offences soon robbed the mortifications of their poignancy; and apathy, in a short time, taking place of sensibility, she learnt to bear them if not with indifference, at least with its precursor contempt.

Amongst the most irksome of the toils to which this subjection made her liable, was the care, — not of the education, nor mind, nor manners, but of the amusements, — of the little nephew of Mrs. Ireton; whom that lady rather exulted than blushed to see universally regarded as a spoilt child.

The temper of this young creature was grown so capricious, from incessant indulgence, that no compliance, no luxury, no diversion could afford him more than momentary pleasure; while his passions were become so ungovernable, that, upon every contrariety or disappointment, he vented his rage, to the utmost extent of his force, upon whomsoever, or whatsoever, animate or inanimate, he could reach.

All the mischief thus committed, the injuries thus sustained, the noise and disturbance thus raised, were to be borne throughout the house without a murmur. Whatever destruction he caused, Mrs. Ireton was always sure was through the fault of some one else; what he mutilated, or broke, she had equal certainty must have been merely by accident; and those he hurt or ill used, must have provoked his anger. If any one ventured to complain, 'twas the sufferer, not the inflictor who was treated as culpable.

It was the misfortune of Juliet to excite, by her novelty, the attention of this young tyrant; and by her powers of entertainment, exerted inadvertently, from a love of obliging, to become his favourite. The hope of softening his temper and manners, by amusing his mind, had blinded her, at first, to the trouble, the torment rather, of such preeminence, which soon proved one of the most serious evils of her situation. Mrs. Ireton, having raised in his young bosom

expectations never to be realised, by passing the impossible decree, that nothing must be denied to her eldest brother's eldest son; had authorised demands from him, and licensed wishes, destructive both to his understanding and his happiness. When the difficulties which this decree occasioned, devolved upon a domestic, she left him to get rid of them as he could; only reserving to herself the right to blame the way that was taken, be it what it might: but when the embarrassment fell to her own lot; when the spoilt urchin claimed what was every way unattainable; she had been in the habit of sending him abroad, for the immediate relief of her nerves. The favour into which he took Juliet now offered a new and more convenient resource. Instead of "Order the carriage, and let the child go out:" Miss Ellis was called upon to play with him; to tell him stories; to shew him pictures; to build houses for him with cards; or to suffer herself to be dragged

unmeaningly, yet wilfully and forcibly, from walk to walk in the garden, or from room to room in the house; till tired, and quarrelling even with her compliance, he recruited his wearied caprices with sleep.

Nor even here ended the encroachments upon her time, her attention, her liberty; not only the spoilt child, but the favourite dog was put under her superintendence; and she was instructed to take charge of the airings and exercise of Bijou; and to carry him where the road was rough or miry, that he might not soil those paws, which had the exclusive privilege of touching the lady of the mansion; and even of pulling, patting, and scratching her robes and attire for his recreation.

To many, in the place of Juliet, the spoilt child and the spoilt cur would have been objects of detestation: but against the mere instruments of malice she harboured no resentment. The dog, though snarling and snapping at

every one but his mistress, Juliet saw as vicious only from evil habits, which were imbibed, nay taught, rather than natural: the child, though wantonly revelling in mischief of every kind, she considered but as a little savage, who, while enjoying the splendour and luxury of civilized life, was as unformed, as rough, as untaught, and therefore as little responsible for his conduct, as if just caught, and brought, wild and untamed, from the woods. The animal, therefore, she exculpated; the child she pitied; it was the mistress of the mansion alone, who, wilful in all she did, and conscious of all she inflicted, provoked bitterer feelings. And to these, the severest poignancy was accidentally added to Juliet, by the cruel local circumstance of receiving continual indignity in the very house, nay the very room, where, in sweetest intercourse, she had been accustomed to be treated upon terms of generous equality by Lady Aurora Granville.

CHAPTER LIV.

JULIET had passed but a short space, by the measure of time, in this new residence, though by that of suffering and disgust it had seemed as long as it was irksome, when, one morning, she was informed, by the nursery-maid, that a grand breakfast was to be given, about two o'clock, to all the first gentry in and near Brighthelmstone.

Mrs. Ireton, herself, making no mention of any such purpose, issued her usual orders for the attendance of Juliet, with her implements of amusement; and went, at an early hour, to a light building, called the Temple of the Sun, which overlooked the sea, from the end of the garden.

This Temple, like every place which Mrs. Ireton capriciously, and even for the shortest interval, inhabited, was now

filled with materials for recreation, which, ingeniously employed, might have whiled away a winter; but which, from her fluctuating whims, were insufficient even for the fleet passage of a few hours. Books, that covered three window-seats; songs and sonatas that covered those books; various pieces of needle-work; a billiard-table; a chess-board; a back-gammon-board; a cup and ball, &c. &c.; all, in turn, were tried; all, in turn, rejected; and invectives the most impatient were uttered against each, as it ceased to afford her pleasure; as if each, with living malignity, had studied to cause her disappointment.

About noon, she took the arm of Juliet, to descend the steps of the Temple. Upon opening the door, Ireton appeared sauntering in the garden. Juliet vexed at his sight, which Elinor had assured her that she would never encounter, severely felt the mortification of being seen in her present situation, by one who had so repeatedly offended

her by injurious suspicions, and familiar impertinence.

Mrs. Ireton, hastily relinquishing the arm of Juliet, from expecting that of her son, at whose sight she was evidently surprised; now resolved, with her most brilliant flourishes, to exhibit the new object of her power.

"Why don't you take care of the child, Miss Ellis?" she cried aloud. "Do you design to let him break his neck down the stone steps? I beg your pardon, though, for asking the question. It may be very *mal à propos.* It may be necessary, perhaps, to some of your plans, to see a tragedy in real life? You may have some work in agitation, that may require that sort of study. I am sorry to have stood so unopportunely in your way: quite ashamed, upon my word, to have prevented your taking a few hints from the child's dislocating a limb, or two; or just fracturing his skull. 'Twould have been a pretty melancholy sight, enough, for an elegiac muse. I

really beg your pardon, for being so uncooth, as to think of such a trumpery circumstance as saving the child's life."

Juliet, during this harangue, assiduously followed the young gentleman; who, with a shout of riotous rebellion, ran down the steps, and jumping into a parterre, selected, by his eye, the most beautiful of the flowers for treading under his feet; and, at every representation of Juliet, flung at her as many pinks, carnations, and geraniums, as his merciless little fingers could grasp.

Ireton, approaching, looked smilingly on, negligently nodding, and calling out, "Well done, Loddard! Bravo, my little Pickle!"

Loddard, determined to merit this honourable testimony of his prowess, continued his sport, with augmented boldness. His wantonness, however, though rude, was childish; Juliet, therefore, though tormented, gave it no serious resentment; but she was not equally indifferent to the more maturely

malicious insolence of Ireton, who, while he openly enjoyed the scene, negligently said to Loddard, "What, my boy, hast got a new nurse?"

Mrs. Ireton, having stood some time leaning upon the balustrade of the steps which she was descending, in vain expectation of the arm of her son, who had only slightly bowed to her, with an "How do do, Ma'am?" to which he waited not for an answer; now indignantly called out, "So I am to be left to myself, am I? In this feeble and alarming state to which I am reduced, incapable to withstand a gust of wind, or to baffle the fall of a leaf, I may take care of myself, may I? I am too stout to require any attention? too robust, too obstreperous to need any help? If I fall down, I may get up again, I suppose? If I faint, I may come to myself again, I imagine? You will have the goodness to permit that, I presume? I may be mistaken, to be sure, but I should presume so. Don't you hear me,

Mistress Ellis? But you are deaf, may be?—I am alarmed to the last degree!—You are suddenly seized, perhaps, with the loss of one of your senses?"

This attack, begun for her son, though, upon his romping with the little boy, in total disregard to its reproach, ending for Juliet, made Ireton now, throwing back his head, to stare, with a sneering half-laugh, at Juliet, exclaim, "Fie, Mrs. Betty! How can you leave Mrs. Ireton, unaided, in such peril? Fie, Mrs. Polly, fie! Mrs. . . . . What is your new nurse's name, my boy?"

The boy, who never held his tongue but when he was desired to speak, would make no answer, but by running violently after Juliet, as she sought to escape from him; flinging flowers, leaves, grass, or whatever he could find, at her, with boisterous shouts of laughter, and with all his little might.

Mrs. Ireton, brought nearly to good humour by the sight of the perplexity and displeasure of Juliet, only uttered,

"Pretty dear! how playful he is!" But when, made still more daring by this applause, the little urchin ventured to touch the hem of her own garments, she became suddenly sensible of his disobedience and wanton mischief, and commanded him from her presence.

As careless of her wrath as he was ungrateful for her favour, the young gentleman thought of nothing so little as of obedience. He jumped and skipped around her, in bold defiance of all authority; laughing loudly in her face; making a thousand rude grimaces; yet screaming, as if attacked by a murderer, when she attempted to catch him; though, the moment that he forced himself out of her reach, hallooing his joyous triumph in her ears, with vociferous exultation.

Juliet was ordered to take him in hand, and carry him off; an order which, to quit the scene, she prepared with pleasure to obey: but the young gentleman, though he pursued her with

fatiguing fondness when she sought to avoid him, now ran wildly away.

Mrs. Ireton, enraged, menaced personal chastisement; but, upon his darting at Juliet, and tearing her gown, she turned abruptly aside, in the apprehension of being called upon for reparation; and, gently saying, "What a frisky little rogue it is!" affected to observe him no longer.

The torn robe proved a potent attraction to the little dog, who, yelping with unmeaning fury, flew at and began gnawing it, with as much vehemence, as if its destruction were essential to his well being.

A party of company was now announced, that begged to join Mrs. Ireton in the garden; and, tripping foremost from the advancing throng, came Selina.

Ireton, flapping his hat over his eyes, leisurely sauntered away. Mrs. Ireton returned to the Temple, to receive her guests with more state; and Juliet

hoping, though doubtfully, some relief and countenance, bent forward to greet her young friend.

Selina, with a look of vivacity and pleasure, eagerly approached; but while her hands were held out, in affectionate amity, and her eyes invited Juliet to meet her, she stopt, as if from some sudden recollection; and, after taking a hasty glance around her, picked a flower from a border of the parterre, and ran back with it to present to Lady Arramede.

Juliet, scarcely disappointed, retreated; and the party advanced in a body. She would fain have hidden herself, but had no power; the boy, with romping violence, forcibly detaining her, by loud shrieks, which rent the air, when she struggled to disengage herself from his hold. And, as every visitor, however stunned or annoyed, uttered, in approaching him, the admiring epithets of "Dear little creature!" "Sweet little love!" "Pretty little dear!" &c. the boy, in common with children of a larger growth,

concluding praise to be approbation, flung himself upon Juliet, with all his force; protesting that he would give her a green gown: while all the company,—upon Mrs. Ireton's appearing at an open window of the Temple,—unanimously joined in extolling his strength, his agility, and his spirited character.

The wearied and provoked Juliet now seriously and strenuously sought to disengage herself from the stubborn young athletic; but he clung round her waist, and was jumping up at her shoulders, to catch at the ribbon of her hat, when Lady Kendover and her niece, who were the last of the company that arrived, entered the garden.

Lady Barbara Frankland no sooner perceived Juliet, and her distress, than, swift as the wind, breaking from her aunt, she flew forward to give her succour; seizing the sturdy little assailant by his arms, when unprepared to defend himself, and twisting him, adroitly, from his prey; exclaiming, "You spoilt little

wicked creature, beg pardon of that lovely Miss Ellis directly! this moment!"

"Ellis! Dear, if it is not Ellis!" cried Selina, now joining them. "How glad I am to see you, my dear Ellis! What an age it is since we met!"

Juliet, whose confidence was somewhat more than staggered in the regard of Selina, coldly courtsied to her; while, with the warmest gratitude, she began expressing her acknowledgements for the prompt and generous kindness of Lady Barbara; when the boy, recovering from his surprise, and furious at any controul, darted at her ladyship with vindictive violence; attempting, and intending, to practise upon her the same feats which had nearly subdued Juliet: but the situation was changed: the exclamations were reversed; and "O, you naughty little thing!" "How can you be so rude?" "Fie, child, fie!" were echoed from mouth to mouth; while every step bent forward to protect "poor Lady Barbara" from the troublesome little creature.

The boy was then seriously made over to his maid, to be new dressed; with a promise of peaches and sugar plums, if he would be so very good a child, as to submit to the repugnant operations of his toilette, without crying or fighting.

The butler now appeared, to announce that the breakfast was ready; and Juliet saw confirmed, that the party had been invited and expected; though Mrs. Ireton meant to impress her with the magnificent idea, that this was her common way of life.

The company all re-entered the house, and all without taking the smallest notice of Juliet; Lady Barbara excepted, who affectionately shook hands with her, and warmly regretted that she did not join the party.

Juliet, to whom the apparent mystery of her situation offered as much apology for others, as it brought distress to herself, went back, far more hurt than offended to the Temple.

Hence, presently, from under one of

the windows, she heard a weak, but fretful and angry voice, morosely giving impatient reprimands to some servant, while imperiously refusing to listen to even the most respectful answer.

Looking from the window, she saw, and not without concern, from the contrast to the good humour which she had herself experienced, that this choleric reproacher was Sir Jaspar Herrington.

The nursery-maid, who came, soon afterwards, in search of some baubles, which her young master had left in the Temple; complained that her mistress's rich brother-in-law, Sir Jaspar, who never entered the house but upon grand invitations, had been at his usual game of scolding, and finding fault with all the servants, till they all wished him at Jericho; sparing nobody but Nanny, whom the men called the Beauty. He was so particular, when he was in his tantarums, the maid added, that he was almost as cross as the old lady herself; except, indeed, to his favourites, and those he

could never do enough for. But he commanded about him at such a rate, that Mrs. Ireton, she was sure, would never let him into the house, if it were not in the hope of wheedling him into leaving the great fortune, that had fallen to him with the name of Herrington, to the young 'Squire; though the young 'Squire was well enough off without it; being certain of the Ireton estate, because it was entailed upon him, if his uncle, Sir Jaspar, should die without children.

Juliet did not hear this history of the ill temper of her generous old beau, without chagrin; but the prating nursery-maid ceased not recording what she called his tantarums, till the well known sound of his crutches announced his approach, when she hastily made her exit.

With the awkward feeling of uncertain opinion, softened off, nevertheless, by the remembrance of strong personal obligation, Juliet presented herself at the door, to shew her intention of descending.

Occupied by the pain of labouring up the steps, he did not raise his head, or perceive her, till he had reached the threshold of the little building. His still brilliant eyes became then brighter, and the air of harsh asperity which, while mounting, his countenance still retained, from recent anger, was suddenly converted into a look of the most lively pleasure, and perfect good humour. After touching his hat, and waving his hand, with an old fashioned, but well bred air of gallantry, he laughingly confessed, that he had ascended with the view of recruiting his strength and spirits, by a private visit to the god Morpheus; to enable him to get through the weighty enterprize, of encountering a throng of frivolous females, without affronting them by his yawns. "How little," he continued, "did I imagine myself coming to Sleep's most resistless conqueror, Delight! If I rouse not now, I must have more soporiferous qualities than the Seven Sleepers! or

even than the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, who took a nap of forty years."

Then entreating her to be seated, he dropt upon the easy chair, which had been prepared for Mrs. Ireton; and crossed his crutches, as if by accident, in a manner that prevented her from retreating. She was the less, however, impatient of this delay, as she saw that the windows looking from the house into the garden, were filled with company, which she desired nothing so little as to pass in review.

Taking, therefore, a place as far from him as was in her power, she made herself an occupation, in arranging some mulberry leaves for silk-worms.

The Baronet, whose face expressed encreasing satisfaction at his situation, courteously sought to draw her into discourse. "My little friends," cried he, smiling, "who are always at work, have continually been tormenting me of late, with pinches and twitches, upon my utter neglect of my sister-in-law, Mrs.

Ireton. I could not for my life imagine why they took so prodigious an interest in my visiting her; but they nipt, and squeezed, and worried me, without intermission; accusing me of misbehaviour; saying she was my sister-in-law; and ill, and hypochondriac; and that it was by no means pretty behaved in me, not to shew her more respect. It was in vain I represented, that she was rich, and did not want me; or that she was disagreeable, and that I did not want her; 'twas all one; they insisted I should go: and this morning, when I would have excused myself from coming to her fine breakfast, they beset me in so many ways, that I was forced to comply. And now I see why! Poor, earthly, mundane mortal that I was! I took them for envious sprites, jealous of my repose! But I see, now, they were only recreative little sylphs, amusing themselves with whipping and spurring me on to my own good!"

And is this, thought Juliet, the man

who bears a character of impatience and ill humour? this man, whose imagination is so playful, and whose desire to please can only be equalled by his desire to serve?

"And where," he continued, "have you all this time been eclipsed? From sundry circumstances, that perversely obtruded themselves upon my knowledge, in defiance of the ill reception I gave them, I was led, at first, to conclude, that you had been spirited away by Sir Lyell Sycamore."

He fixed his eyes upon her curiously; but the colour that rose in her cheeks betrayed no secret consciousness; it shewed open resentment.

"O! I soon saw," he resumed, as if he had been answered, though she had not deigned to disclaim an idea that she deemed fitted simply for contempt; "by the mortified silence of my young gallant, that the fates had not been propitious to his wishes. In characters of his description, success never courts the

shade. It basks in the sunshine, and seeks the broadest day. How is it that you have thus piqued the vain spark? He came to me in such a flame, to upbraid me for what he called the cursed ridiculous dance that I had led him, that I fairly thought he meant to call me out! I began, directly, to look about me for the stoutest of my crutches, to parry, for a last minute or two, his broad sword; and to deliberate which might be the thickest of my leather cushions, to hold up in my defence, for reverberating the ball, in case he should prefer pistols. But he deigned, most fortunately, to content himself with only abusing me: hinting, that such superannuated old geese, as those who had passed their grand climacteric, ought not to meddle with affairs of which they must have lost even the memory. I let him bounce off without any answer; very thankful to the "Sisters three" to feel myself in a whole skin."

Looking at her, then, with an ex-

pression of humorous reproach, "You will permit me, I hope, at least," he added, "to flatter myself, that, when your indulgence to the garrulity of age has induced you to bear with my loquacity till I am a little hoarser, your consideration for sore throats and heated lungs, will prevail upon you to utter a little word or two in your turn?"

Juliet, laughing, answered that she had been too well amused, to be aware how little she had seemed to merit his exertions.

"Tell me, then," cried he, with looks that spoke him enchanted by this reply; "through what extraordinary mechanism, in the wheel of fortune, you have been rolled to this spot? The benevolent sprites, who have urged me hither, have not given me a jot of information how you became known to Mrs. Ireton? By what strange spell have you been drawn in, to seem an inmate of her mansion? and what philters and potions have you swallowed, to make you endure her never-ending vagaries?"

Half smiling, half sighing, Juliet looked down; not willing to accept, though hardly able to resist, the offered licence for complaint.

"Make no stranger," the old Baronet laughingly added, "of me, I beg! She is my sister-in-law, to be sure; but the law, with all its subtleties, has not yet entailed our affections, with our estates, to our relations; nor articled our tastes, with our jointures, to our dowagers. Use, therefore, no manner of ceremony! How do you bear with her freaks and fancies? or rather,—for that is the essential point, why do you bear with them?"

"Can that," said Juliet, "be a question?"

"Not a wise one, I confess!" he returned; "for what but Necessity could link together two creatures who seem formed to give a view of human nature diametrically opposite the one from the other? These indeed must be imps,—

and imps of darkness,—who, busy, busy still! delight

To join the gentle to the rude! *

that can have coupled so unharmonizing a pair. Hymen, with all the little active sinister devils in his train, that yoke together, pell mell, for life, hobbling age with bounding youth; choleric violence with trembling timidity; haggard care with thoughtless merriment;—Hymen himself, that marrying little lawyer, who takes upon him to unite what is most discordant, and to tie together all that is most heterogeneous; even he, though provided with what is, so justly, called a licence, for binding together what nature itself seems to sunder; he, even he, I assert, never buckled in the same noose, two beings so completely and equally dissimilar, both without and within. Since such, however, has been the ordinance of these fantastic workers of

* Thompson.

wonders, will you let me ask, in what capacity it has pleased their impships to conjure you hither?"

Juliet hesitated, and looked ashamed to answer.

"You are not, I hope," cried he, fixing upon her his keen eyes, "one of those ill-starred damsels, whose task, in the words of Madame de Maintenon, is to "amuse the unamuseable?" You are not, I hope, ..." he stopt, as if seeking a phrase, and then, rather faintly, added, "her companion?"

"Her humble servant, Sir!" with a forced smile, said Juliet; "and yet, humbled as I feel myself in that capacity, not humble enough for its calls!"

The smiles of the old Baronet vanished in a moment, and an expression of extreme severity took their place. "She uses you ill, then?" he indignantly cried, and, grasping the knobs of his two crutches, he struck their points against the floor, with a heaviness that made the little building shake, ejacu-

lating, in a hoarse inward voice, "Curse her!"

Juliet stared at him, affrighted by his violence.

"Can it be possible," he cried, "that so execrable a fate should be reserved for so exquisite a piece of workmanship? Sweet witch! were I but ten years younger, I would snatch you from her infernal claws!—or rather, could I cut off twenty;—yet even then the disparity would be too great!—thirty years younger,—or perhaps forty,—my hand and fortune should teach that Fury her distance!"

Juliet, surprised, and doubting whether what dropt from him were escaped sincerity, or purposed irony, looked with so serious a perplexity, that, struck and ashamed, he checked himself; and recovering his usually polite equanimity, smiled at his own warmth, saying, "Don't be alarmed, I beg! Don't imagine that I shall forget myself; nor want to hurry away, lest my animation should

be dangerous! The heat that, at five-and-twenty, might have fired me into a fever, now raises but a kindly glow, that stops, or keeps off stagnation. The little sprites, who hover around me, though they often mischievously spur my poor fruitless wishes, always take care, by seasonable twitches, in some vulnerable gouty part, to twirl me from the regions of hope and romance, to very sober real life!"

Fearful of appearing distrustful, Juliet looked satisfied, and again he went on.

"Since, then, 'tis clear that there can be no danger in so simple an intercourse, why should I not give myself the gratification of telling you, that every sight of you does me good? renovates my spirits; purifies my humours; sweetens my blood; and braces my nerves? Never talk to me with mockery of fairyism, witchcraft, and sylphs; the real influence of lovely youth, is a thousand times more wonderful, more potent, and more incredible! When I have seen you only an instant, I feel in charity with all man-

kind for the rest of the day; and, at night, my kind little friends present you to me again; renew every pleasing idea; revive the most delightful images; and paint you to me—just such as I see you at this moment!"

Juliet, embarrassed, talked of returning to the house.

"Do you blush?" cried he, with quickness, and evidently increasing admiration; "is it possible that you are not enough habituated to praise, to hear it without modest confusion? I have seen 'full many a lady—but you—O you!—so perfect and so peerless are created, of every creature best!' *

"My whole life has been spent in worshipping beauty, till within these very few years, when I have gotten something like a surfeit, and meant to give it over. For I have watched and followed Beauties, till I have grown sick of them. I have admired fine features, only to be disgusted with vapid vanity. A face with

* Shakespeare.

a little meaning, though as ugly as sin and satan, I have lately thought worth forty of them! But you! fair sorceress! you have conjured me round again to my old work! I have found the spell irresistible. You have such intelligence of countenance; such spirit with such sweetness; smiles so delicious, though rare! looks so speaking; grace so silent;—that I forget you are a beauty; and fasten my eyes upon you, only to understand what you say when you don't utter a word! That's all! Don't be uneasy, therefore, at my staring. Though, to be candid, we know ourselves so little, that, 'tis possible, had you not first caught my eye as a beauty, I might never have looked at you long enough to find out your wit!"

A footman now came to acquaint Sir Jaspar, that the rice-soup, which he had ordered, was ready; and that the ladies were waiting for the honour of his company to breakfast.

I heartily wish they would wait for

my company, till I desire to have theirs!" Sir Jaspar muttered: but, sensible of the impropriety of a refusal, arose, and, taking off his hat, with a studied formality, which he hoped would impress the footman with respect for its object, followed his messenger: whispering, nevertheless, as he quitted the building, "Leave you for a breakfast!—I would almost as willingly be immersed in the witches' cauldron, and boiled into morsels, to become a breakfast myself, for the amusement of the audience at a theatre!"

CHAPTER LV.

JULIET, who perceived that the windows were still crowded with company, contentedly kept her place; and, taking up the second volume of the Guardian, found, in the lively instruction, the chaste morality, and the exquisite humour of Addison, an enjoyment which no repetition can cloy.

In a short time, to her great discomposure, she was broken in upon by Ireton; who, drawing before the door, which he shut, an easy chair, cast himself indolently upon it, and, stretching out his arms, said, "Ah ha! the fair Ellis! How art thee, my dear?"

Far more offended than surprised by this freedom, Juliet, perceiving that she could not escape, affected to go on with her reading, as if he had not entered the building.

" Don't be angry, my dear," he continued, " that I did not speak to you before all those people. There's no noticing a pretty girl, in public, without raising such a devil of a clamour, that it's enough to put a man out of countenance. Besides, Mrs. Ireton is such a very particular quiz, that she would be sure to contrive I should never have a peep at you again, if once she suspected the pleasure I take in seeing you. However, I am going to turn a dutiful son, and spend some days here. And, by that means, we can squeeze an opportunity, now and then, of getting a little chat together."

Juliet could no longer refrain from raising her head, with amazement, at this familiar assurance: but he went on, totally disregarding the rebuke of her indignant eye.

" How do you like your place here, my dear? Mrs. Ireton's rather qualmish, I am afraid. I never can bear to stay with her myself; except when I have

some point to carry. I can't devise what the devil could urge you to come into such a business. And where's Harleigh? What's he about? Gone to old Nick I hope with all my heart! But you, — why are you separated? What's the reason you are not with him?"

Yet more provoked, though determined not to look up again, Juliet fixed her eyes upon the book.

Ireton continued: " What a sly dog he is, that Harleigh! But what the deuce could provoke him to make me cut such a silly figure before Lord Melbury, with my apologies, and all that? He took me in, poz! I thought he'd nothing to do with you. And if you had not had that fainting fit, at the concert; which I suppose you forgot to give him notice of, that put him so off his guard, I should have believed all he vowed and swore, of having no connection with you, and all that, to this very moment."

This was too much. Juliet gravely arose, put down her book, and said,

with severity, " Mr. Ireton, you will be so good as to let me pass!"

" No, not I! No, not I! my dear!" he answered, still lolling at his ease. " We must have a little chat together first. 'Tis an age since I have been able to speak with you. I have been confounded discreet, I promise you. I have not told your secret to a soul."

" What secret, Sir?" cried Juliet, hastily.

" Why who you are, and all that."

" If you knew, Sir," recovering her calmness, she replied, " I should not have to defend myself from the insults of a son, while under the protection of his mother!"

" Ha! ha! ha!" cried he. " What a droll piece of dainty delicacy thee art! I'd give a cool hundred, this moment, only to know what the deuce puts it into thy little head, to play this farce such a confounded length of time, before one comes to the catastrophe."

Juliet, with a disdainful gesture, again took her book.

"Why won't you trust me, my dear? You sha'n't repent it, I promise you. Tell me frankly, now, who are you?— Hay?"

Juliet only turned over a new leaf of her book.

"How can you be so silly, child?— Why won't you let me serve you? You don't know what use I may be of to you. Come, make me your friend! only trust me, and I'll go to the very devil for you with pleasure."

Juliet read on.

"Come, my love, don't be cross! Speak out! Put aside these dainty airs. Surely you a'n't such a little fool, as to think to take me in, as you have done Melbury and Harleigh?"

Juliet felt her cheeks now heated with increased indignation.

"As to Melbury,—'tis a mere schoolboy, ready to swallow any thing; and as to Harleigh, he's such a queer, out of the way genius, that he's like nobody: but as to me, my dear, I'm a man of the

world. Not so easily played upon, I promise you! I have known you from the very beginning! Found you out at first sight! Only I did not think it worth while telling you so, while you appeared so counfounded ugly. But now that I see you are such a pretty creature, I feel quite an interest for you. So tell me who you are? Will you?"

Somewhat piqued, at length, by her resolute silence, "Nay," he added, with affected scorn, "don't imagine I have any view! Don't disturb yourself with any freaks and qualms of that sort. You are a fine girl, to be sure. Devilish handsome, I own; but still too — too — grave, — grim, — What the deuce is the word I mean? for my taste. I like something more buckish. So pray make yourself easy. I sha'n't interfere with your two sparks. I am perfectly aware I should have but a bad chance. I know I am neither as good a pigeon to pluck as Melbury, nor as marvellous

a wight to overcome as Harleigh. But I can't for my life make out why you don't take to one or t'other of them, and put yourself at your ease. I'm deadly curious to know what keeps you from coming to a finish. Melbury would be managed the easiest; but I strongly suspect you like Harleigh best. What do you turn your back for? That I mayn't see you blush? Come, come, don't play the baby with a man of the world like me."

To the infinite relief of the disgusted Juliet, she now heard the approach of some foot-step. Ireton, who heard it also, nimbly arose, and, softly moving his chair from the door, cast half his body out of the window, and, lolling upon his elbows, began humming an air; as if totally occupied in regarding the sea.

A footman, who entered, told Juliet that his lady desired that she would come to the parlour, to play and sing to the company, while they breakfasted.

Juliet, colouring at this unqualified order, hesitated what to answer; while Ireton, turning round, and pretending not to have heard what was said, maliciously made the man repeat, "My lady, Sir, bid me tell Miss Ellis, that she must come to play and sing to the company."

"Play and sing?" repeated Ireton. "O the devil! Must we be bored with playing and singing too? But I did not know breakfast was ready, and I am half starved."

He then sauntered from the building; but the moment that the footman was out of sight, turned back, to say, "How devilish provoking to be interrupted in this manner! How can we contrive to meet again, my dear?"

The answer of Juliet was shutting and bolting the door.

His impertinence, however, occupied her mind only while she was under its influence; the insignificance of his character, notwithstanding the malice of

his temper, made it sink into nothing, to give way to the new rising difficulty, how she might bear to obey, or how risk to refuse, the rude and peremptory summons which she had just received. Ought I, she cried, to submit to treatment so mortifying? Are there no boundaries to the exactions of prudence upon feeling? or, rather, is there not a mental necessity, a call of character, a cry of propriety, that should supersede, occasionally, all prudential considerations, however urgent?—Oh! if those who receive, from the unequal conditions of life, the fruits of the toils of others, could,—only for a few days,—experience, personally, how cruelly those toils are embittered by arrogance, or how sweetly they may be softened by kindness,—the race of the Mrs. Iretons would become rare,—and Lady Aurora Granville might, perhaps, be paralleled!

Yet, with civility, with good manners, had Mrs. Ireton made this request; not issued it as a command by a footman;

Juliet felt that, in her present dependent condition, however ill she might be disposed for music, or for public exhibition, she ought to yield: and even now, the horrour of having another asylum to seek; the disgrace of seeming driven, thus continually, from house to house; though they could not lessen her repugnance to indelicacy and haughtiness, cooled all ardour of desire for trying yet another change; till she should have raised a sufficient sum for joining Gabriella; and softening, nay delighting, the future toils to which she might be destined, by the society of that cherished friend.

In a few minutes, she was visited by Selina, who, rapturously embracing her, declared that she could not stay away from her any longer; and volubly began her usual babble of news and tales; to all which Juliet gave scarcely the coldest attention; till she had the satisfaction of hearing that the health of Elinor was re-established.

Selina then owned that she had been sent by Mrs. Ireton, to desire that Miss Ellis would make more haste.

Juliet worded a civil excuse; which Selina, with hands uplifted, from amazement, carried back to the breakfast-room.

Soon afterwards, peals of laughter announced the vicinity of the Miss Crawleys; who merrily called aloud upon Ireton, to come and help them to haul The Ellis, Will ye, nill ye? to the piano-forte, to play and sing.

Happy in this intimation of their purpose, Juliet bolted the door; and would not be prevailed upon to open it, either by their vociferous prayers, or their squalls of disappointment.

But, in another minute, a slight rustling sound drawing her eyes to a window, she saw Ireton preparing to make a forced entry.

She darted, now, to the door, and, finding the passage clear, as the Miss Crawleys had gone softly round, to

witness the exploit of Ireton, seized the favourable moment for eluding observation; and was nearly arrived at the house, before the besiegers of the cage perceived that the bird was flown.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE two sisters no sooner discovered the escape of their prey, than, screaming with violent laughter, they began a romping race in its pursuit.

Near the entrance into the hall, Juliet was met by Selina, with commands from Mrs. Ireton, that she would either present herself, immediately, to the company; or seek another abode.

In minds of strong sensibility, arrogance rouses resentment more quickly even than injury: a message so gross, an affront so public, required, therefore, no deliberation on the part of Juliet; and she was answering that she would make her preparations to depart; when the Miss Cawleys, rushing suddenly upon her, exclaimed, with clamourous joy, "She's caught! She's caught! The Ellis is caught!" and, each of them

seizing a hand, they dragged her, with merry violence, into the breakfast-room.

Her hoydening conductors failed not to excite the attention of the whole assembly; though it fell not, after the first glance, upon themselves. Juliet, to whom exercise and confusion gave added beauty; and whom no disorder of attire could rob of an air of decency, which, inherent in her nature, was always striking in her demeanour; was no sooner seen, than, whether with censure or applause, she monopolized all remark.

Mrs. Ireton haughtily bid her approach.

Averse, yet unwilling to risk the consequences of a public breach, she slowly advanced.

"I am afraid, Ma'am," said Mrs. Ireton, with a smile of derision; "I am afraid, Ma'am, you have hurried yourself? It is not much above an hour, I believe, since I did myself the honour of sending for you. I have no

conception how you have been able to arrive so soon! Pray how far do you think it may be from hence to the Temple? ten or twelve yards, I verily believe! You must really be ready to expire!"

Having constrained herself to hear thus much, Juliet conceived that the duty even of her humble station could require no more; she made, therefore, a slight reverence, with intention to withdraw. But Mrs. Ireton, offended, cried, "Whither may you be going, Ma'am? —And pray, Ma'am,—if I may take the liberty to ask such a question,—who told you to go?—Was it I?—Did any body hear me?—Did you, Lady Arramede?—or you, Miss Brinville?—or only Miss Ellis herself? For, to be sure I must have done it: I take that for granted: she would not, certainly, think of going without leave, after I have sent for her. So I make no doubt but I did it. Though I can't think how it happened, I own. 'Twas perfectly

without knowing it, I confess. In some fit of absence—perhaps in my sleep;—for I have slept, too, perhaps, without knowing it!"

Sarcasms so witty, uttered by a lady at an assembly in her own house, could not fail of being received with applause; and Mrs. Ireton, looking around her triumphantly, regarded the disconcerted Juliet as a completely vanquished vassal. In a tone, therefore, that marked the most perfect self-satisfaction, "Pray, Ma'am," she continued, "for what might you suppose I did myself the favour to want you? was it only to take a view of your new *costume*? 'Tis very careless and picturesque, to be sure, to rove abroad in that agreeable dishabille, just like the 'maiden all forlorn;' or rather, to speak with more exactitude, like the 'man all tattered and torn,' for 'tis more properly his *costume* you adopt, than the neat, tidy maiden's."

The warm-hearted young Lady Bar-

bara, all pity and feeling for Juliet, here broke from her quiet and cautious aunt, and, with irrepressible eagerness, exclaimed, "Mrs. Ireton, 'twas Mr. Loddard, your own little naughty nephew, who deranged in that manner the dress of that elegant Miss Ellis."

The Miss Crawleys, now, running to the little boy, called out, "The Loddard! the Loddard! 'tis the Loddard has set up the new *costume!*"

Mrs. Ireton, though affecting to laugh, had now done with the subject; and, while she was taking a pinch of snuff, to gain time to suggest some other, Sir Jaspar Herrington, advancing to Juliet, said, "Has this young lady no place?" and, gallantly taking her hand, he led her to his own chair, and walked to another part of the room.

A civility such as this from Sir Jaspar, made all the elders of the company stare, and all the younger titter; but the person the most surprized was Mrs. Ireton, who hastily called out, "Miss Ellis

would not do such a thing! Take Sir Jaspar's own seat! That has his own particular cushions! She could not do such a thing! I should think not, at least! I may judge ill, but I should think not. A seat prepared for Sir Jaspar by my own order! Miss Ellis can dispense with having an easy chair, and three cushions, I should presume! I may be wrong, to be sure, but I should presume so!"

"Madam," answered Sir Jaspar, "in days of old, I never could bear to sit, when I saw a lady standing; and though those days are past, alas! and gone,—still I cannot, even to escape a twitch of the gout, see a fair female neglected, without feeling a twitch of another kind, that gives me yet greater pain."

"Your politeness, Sir Jaspar," replied Mrs. Ireton, "we all know; and, if it were for one of my guests,—but Miss Ellis can hardly desire, I should suppose, to see you drop down with fatigue, while she is reposing upon your arm-chair. Not that I pretend to know

her way of thinking! I don't mean that. I don't mean to have it imagined I have the honour of her confidence; but I should rather suppose she could not insist upon turning you out of your seat, only to give you a paroxysm of the gout."

However internally moved, Juliet endured this harangue in total silence; convinced that where all authority is on the side of the aggressor, resistance only provokes added triumph. Her looks, therefore, though they shewed her to be hurt and offended, evinced a dignified forbearance, superiour to the useless reproach, and vain retaliation, of unequal contention.

She rose, nevertheless, from the seat which she had only momentarily, and from surprise occupied, and would have quitted the room, but that she saw she should again be publicly called back; and hers was not a situation for braving open enmity. She thankfully, however, accepted a chair which was brought to her by Sir Marmaduke Crawley, and

placed next to that which had been vacated by the old Baronet; who then returned to his own.

She now hoped to find some support from his countenance; as his powerful situation in the house, joined to his age, would make his smallest attention prove to her a kind of protection. Her expectation, however, was disappointed: he did not address to her a word; or appear to have ever beheld her before; and his late act of politeness seemed exerted for a perfect stranger, from habitual good breeding.

And is it you, thought the pensive Juliet, who, but a few minutes since, spoke to me with such flattery, such preference? with an even impassioned regard? And shall this so little assembly guide and awe you? There, where I wished to escape your notice, you obtruded upon me your compliments;—while here, where a smile would be encouragement, where notice would be charity, you affect to have forgotten, or

appear never to have seen me! Ah! mentally continued the silent moralist, if we reflected upon the difficulty of gaining esteem; upon the chances against exciting affection; upon the union of time and circumstance necessary for obtaining sincere regard; we should require courage to withhold, not to follow, the movement of kindness, that, where distress sighs for succour, where helplessness solicits support, gives power to the smallest exertion, to a single word, to a passing smile,—to bestow a favour, and to do a service, that catch, in the brief space of a little moment, a gratitude that never dies!

But, while thus to be situated, was pain and dejection to Juliet, to see her seated, however unnoticed, in the midst of this society, was almost equally irksome to Mrs. Ireton; who, after some vain internal fretting, ordered the butler to carry about refreshments; consoled with the certainty, that he would as little dare present any to Juliet, as omit to present them to every one else.

The smiles and best humour of Mrs. Ireton now soon returned; for the dependent state of Juliet became more than ever conspicuous, when thus decidedly she was marked as the sole person, in a large assembly, that the servants were permitted, if not instructed to neglect.

Juliet endeavoured to sit tranquil, and seem unconcerned; but her fingers were in continual motion; her eyes, meaning to look no where, looked every where; and Mrs. Ireton had the gratification to perceive, that, however she struggled for indifference, she was fully sensible of the awkwardness of her situation.

But this was no sooner remarked by Lady Barbara Frankland, than, starting with vivacity from her vainly watchful aunt, she flew to her former instructress, crying, "Have you taken nothing yet, Miss Ellis? O pray, then, let me chuse your ice for you?"

She ran to a side-board, and selecting the colour most pleasing to her eyes,

hastened with it to the blushing, but relieved and grateful Juliet; to whom this benevolent attention seemed instantly to restore the self-command, that pointed indignities, and triumphant derision, were sinking into abashed depression.

The sensation produced by this action in Mrs. Ireton, was as ungenial as that which it caused to Juliet was consolatory. She could not for a moment endure to see the creature of her power, whom she looked upon as destined for the indulgence of her will, and the play of her authority, receive a mark of consideration which, if shewn even to herself, would have been accepted as a condescension. Abruptly, therefore, while they were standing together, and conversing, she called out, " Is it possible, Miss Ellis, that you can see the child in such imminent danger, and stay there amusing yourself?"

Lady Kendover hastily called off her young niece; and Juliet, sighing, crossed over the room, to take charge

of the little boy, who was sitting a straddle out of one of the windows.

"But I had flattered myself," cried Sir Marmaduke Crawley, addressing Mrs. Ireton, "that we should have a little music?"

Mrs. Ireton, to whom the talents of Juliet gave pleasure in proportion only to her own repugnance to bringing them into play, had relinquished the projected performance, when she perceived the general interest which was excited by the mere appearance of the intended performer. She declared herself, therefore, so extremely fearful lest some mischief should befal her little nephew, that she could not possibly trust him from the care of Miss Ellis.

Half the company, now, urged by the thirst of fresh amusement, professed the most passionate fondness for children, and offered their services to watch the dear, sweet little boy, while Miss Ellis should play or sing; but the averseness of Ellis remained uncombated by

Mrs. Ireton, and, therefore, unconquered.

The party was preparing to break up, when Mr. Giles Arbe entered the room, to apologize for the non-appearance of Miss Arbe, his cousin, who had bid him bring word, he said, that she was taken ill.

Ireton, by a few crafty questions, soon drew from him, that Miss Arbe was only gone to a little private music-meeting at Miss Sycamore's: though, affrighted when he had made the confession, he entreated Mrs. Ireton not to take it amiss; protesting that it was not done in any disrepect to her, but merely because his cousin was more amused at Miss Sycamore's.

Mrs. Ireton, extremely piqued, answered, that she should be very careful, in future, not to presume to make an invitation to Miss Arbe, but in a total dearth of other entertainment; in a famine; or public fast.

But, the moment he sauntered into

another room, to partake of some refreshments, "That old savage," she cried, "is a perfect horrour! He has not a single atom of common sense; and if he were not Miss Arbe's cousin, one must tell one's butler to shew him the door. At least, such is my poor opinion. I don't pretend to be a judge; but such is my notion!"

"O! I adore him!" cried Miss Crawley. "He makes me laugh till I am ready to die! He has never a guess what he is about; and he never hears a word one says. And he stares so when one laughs at him! O! he's the delightfullest, stupidest, dear wretch that breathes!"

"O! I can't look at him without laughing!" exclaimed Miss Di. "He's the best thing in nature! He's delicious! enchanting! delightful! O! so dear a fool!"

"He is quite unfit," said Mrs. Maple, "for society; for he says every thing that comes uppermost, and has not the least idea of what is due to people."

"O! he is the sweetest-tempered, kindest-hearted creature in the world!" exclaimed Lady Barbara. "My aunt's woman has heard, from Miss Arbe's maid, all his history. He has quite ruined himself by serving poor people in distress. He is so generous, he can never pronounce a refusal."

"But he dresses so meanly," said Miss Brinville, "that mamma and I have begged Miss Arbe not to bring him any more to see us. Besides,—he tells every thing in the world to every body."

"Poor Miss Arbe a'n't to blame, I assure you, Miss Brinville," said Selina; "for she dislikes him as much as you do; only when her papa invited him to live with them, he was very rich; and it was thought he would leave all his fortune to them. But, since then, Miss Arbe says, he is grown quite poor; for he has dawdled away almost all his money, in one way or another; letting folks out of prison, setting people up in business, and all that."

"O! he's the very king of quizzes!" cried Ireton. "He drags me out of the spleen, when I feel as if there were no possibility I could yawn on another half hour."

Sir Jaspar now, looking with an air of authority towards Ireton, said, "It would have been your good star, not your evil genius, by which you would have been guided, Mr. Ireton, had you been attracted to this old gentleman as to an example, rather than as a butt for your wit. He has very good parts, if he knew how to make use of them; though he has a simplicity of manners, that induces common observers to conclude him to be nearly an ideot. And, indeed, an absent man seems always in a state of childhood; for as he is never occupied with what is present, those who think of nothing else, naturally take it for granted that what passes is above his comprehension; when, perhaps, it is only below his attention. But with Mr. Arbe, though his temper

is incomparably good and placid, absence is neither want of understanding, nor of powers of observation; for, when once he is awakened to what is passing, by any thing that touches his feelings of humanity, or his sense of justice, his seeming stupor turns to energy; his silence is superseded by eloquence; and his gentle diffidence is supplanted by a mental courage, which electrifies with surprize, from its contrast with his general docility; and which strikes, and even awes, from an apparent dignity of defying consequences;—though, in fact, it is but the effect of never weighing them. Such, however, as he is, Mr. Ireton, with the singularities of his courage, or the oddities of his passiveness, he is a man who is useful to the world, from his love of doing good; and happy in himself, from the serenity of a temper unruffled by any species of malignity."

Ireton ventured not to manifest any resentment at this conclusion; but

when, by his embarrassed air, Sir Jaspar saw that it was understood, he smiled, and more gaily added, "If the fates, the sisters three, and such little branches of learning, had had the benevolence to have fixed my own birth under the influence of the same planet with that of Mr. Giles Arbe, how many twitches, goadings, and worries should I have been spared, from impatience, ambition, envy, discontent, and ill will!"

The subject was here dropt, by the re-entrance of Mr. Arbe; who, observing Selina, said that he wanted prodigiously to enquire about her poor aunt, whom, lately, he had met with no where; though she used to be every where.

"My aunt, Sir?—She's there!" said Selina, pointing to Mrs. Maple.

"No, no, I don't mean that aunt; I mean your young aunt, that used to be so all alive and clever. What's become of her?"

"O, I dare say it's my sister you are thinking of?"

"Ay, it's like enough; for she's young enough, to be sure; only you look such a mere child. Pray how is she now? I was very sorry to hear of her cutting her throat."

A titter, which was immediately exalted into a hearty laugh by the Miss Crawleys, was all the answer.

"It was not right to do such a thing," he continued; "very wrong indeed. There's no need to be afraid of not dying soon enough, for we only come to be gone! I pitied her, however, with all my heart, for love is but a dangerous thing; it makes older persons than she is go astray, one way or other. And it was but unkind of Mr. Harleigh not to marry her, whether he liked or not, to save her from such a naughty action. And pray what is become of that pretty creature that used to teach you all music? I have enquired for her at Miss Matson's, often; but I always forgot where they said she was gone. Indeed they made me a little angry about her, which,

probably, was the reason that I could never recollect what they told me of her direction."

"Angry, Mr. Giles?" repeated Mrs. Ireton, with an air of restored complacency; "What was it, then, they said of her? Not that I am very curious to hear it, as I presume you will believe! You won't imagine it, I presume, a matter of the first interest to me!"

"O, what they said of her was very bad! very bad, indeed; and that's the reason I give no credit to it."

"Well, well, but what was it?" cried Ireton.

"Why they told me that she was turned toad-eater."

Universal and irresistible smiles throughout the whole company, to the exception of Lady Barbara and Sir Jaspar, now heightened the embarrassment of Juliet into pain and distress: but young Loddard every moment struggled to escape into the garden, through the window; and she did not dare quit her post.

"So I asked them what they meant," Mr. Giles continued; "for I never heard of any body's eating toads; though I am assured our neighbours, on t'other bank, are so fond of frogs. But they made it out, that it only meant a person who would swallow any thing, bad or good; and do whatever he was bid, right or wrong; for the sake of a little pay."

This definition by no means brought the assembly back to its gravity; but while Juliet, ashamed and indignant, kept her face turned constantly towards the garden, Ireton called out, "Why you don't speak to your little friend, Loddard, Mr. Giles. There he is, at the window."

Mr. Giles now, notwithstanding her utmost efforts to avoid his eyes, perceived the blushing Juliet; though, doubting his sight, he stared and exclaimed, "Good la! that lady's very like Miss Ellis! And, I protest, 'tis she herself! And just as pretty as ever!

And with the same innocent face that not a soul can either buy or make, but God Almighty himself!"

He then enquired after her health and welfare, with a cordiality that somewhat lessened the pain caused by the general remark that was produced by his address: but the relief was at an end upon his adding, "I wanted to see you prodigiously, for I have never forgotten your paying your debts so prettily, against your will, that morning. It fixed you in my good opinion. I hope, however, it is a mistake, what they tell me, that you are turned what they call toad-eater? and have let yourself out, at so much a year, to say nothing that you think; and to do nothing that you like; and to beg pardon when you are not in fault; and to eat all the offals; and to be beat by the little gentleman; and worried by the little dog? I hope all that's mere misapprehension, my dear; for it would be but a very mean way of getting money."

The calmness of conscious superiority, with which Juliet heard the beginning of these interrogatories, was converted into extreme confusion, by their termination, from the appearance of justice which the incidents of the morning had given to the attack.

" For now," continued he, " that you have paid all your debts, you ought to hold up your head ; for, where nothing is owing, we are all of us equal, rich and poor ; another man's riches no more making him my superiour, or benefactor, if I do not partake of them, than my poverty makes me his servant, or dependent, if I neither work for, nor am benefited by him. And I am your witness that you gave every one his due. So don't let any body put you out of your proper place."

The mortification of Juliet, at this public exhortation, upon a point so delicate, was not all that she had to endure : the little dog, who, though incessantly tormented by the little boy,

always followed him; kept scratching her gown, to be helped up to the window, that he might play with, or snarl at him, more at his ease; and the boy, making a whip of his pocket-handkerchief, continually attracted, though merely to repulse him; while Juliet, seeking alternately to quiet both, had not a moment's rest.

"Why now, what's all this my pretty lady?" cried Mr. Giles, perceiving her situation. "Why do you let those two plagueful things torment you so? Why don't you teach them to be better behaved."

"Miss Ellis would be vastly obliging, certainly," with a supercilious brow, said Mrs. Ireton, "to correct my nephew! I don't in the least mean to contest her abilities for superintending his chastisement; not in the least, I assure you! But only, as I never heard of my brother's giving her such a *carte blanche*; and as Idon't recollect having given it myself,—though I may have done it, again, perhaps, in my sleep!—I should

be happy to learn by what authority she would be invested with such powers of discipline?"

"By what authority? That of humanity, Ma'am! Not to spoil a poor ignorant little fellow-creature; nor a poor innocent little beast."

"It would be immensely amiable of her, Sir, no doubt," said Mrs. Ireton, reddening, "to take charge of the morals of my household; immensely! I only hope you will be kind enough to instruct the young person, at the same time, how she may hold her situation? That's all! I only hope that!"

"How? Why by doing her duty! If she can't hold it by that, 'tis her duty to quit it. Nobody is born to be trampled upon."

"I hope, too, soon," said Mrs. Ireton, scoffingly, "nobody will be born to be poor!"

"Good! true!" returned he, nodding his head. "Nobody should be poor! That is very well said. However, if you think her so poor, I can give you

the satisfaction to shew you your mistake. She mayn't, indeed, be very rich, poor lady, at bottom; but still —"

"No, indeed, am I not!" hastily cried Juliet, frightened at the communication which she saw impending.

"But still," continued he, "if she is poor, it is not for want of money; nor for want of credit, neither; for she has bank-notes in abundance in one of her work-bags; and not a penny of them is her own! which shews her to be a person of great honour."

Every one now looked awakened to a new curiosity; and Selina exclaimed, "O la! have you got a fortune, then, my dear Ellis? O! I dare say, then, my guess will prove true at last! for I dare say you are a princess in disguise?"

"As far as disguise, goes Selina," answered Mrs. Maple, "we have never, I think, disputed! but as to a princess . . . . .!"

"A princess?" repeated Mrs. Ireton.

" Upon my word, this is an honour I had not imagined! I own my stupidity! I can't but own my stupidity; but I really had never imagined myself so much honoured, as to suspect that I had a princess under my roof, who was so complaisant as to sing, and play, and read to me, at my pleasure; and to study how to amuse and divert me! I confess, I had never suspected it! I am quite ashamed of my total want of sagacity; but it had never occurred to me!"

" And why not, Ma'am?" cried Mr. Giles. " Why may not a princess be pretty, and complaisant, and know how to sing and play, and read, as well as another lady? She is just as able to learn as you, or any common person. I never heard that a princess took her rank in the place of her faculties. I know no difference; except that, if she does the things with good nature, you ought to love and honour her the double, in consideration of the great temptation she has to be proud and idle, and to do

nothing. We all envy the great, when we ought only to revere them if they are good, and to pity them if they are bad; for they have the same infirmities that we have; and nobody that dares put them in mind of them: so that they often go to the grave, before they find out that they are nothing but poor little men and women, like the rest of us. For my part, when I see them worthy, and amiable, I look up to them as prodigies! Whereas, a common person, such as you, or I, Ma'am,—"

Mrs. Ireton, unable to bear this phrase, endeavoured to turn the attention of the company into another channel, by abruptly calling upon Juliet to go to the piano-forte.

Juliet entreated to be excused.

"Excused? And why, Ma'am? What else have you got to do? What are your avocations? I shall really take it as a favour to be informed."

"Don't teize her, pretty lady; don't teize her," cried Mr. Giles. "If she

likes to sing, it's very agreeable; but if not, don't make a point of it, for it's not a thing at all essential."

"Likes it?" repeated Mrs. Ireton, superciliously; "We must do nothing, then, but what we like? Even when we are in other people's houses? Even when we exist only through the goodness of some of our superiours? Still we are to do only what we like? I am quite happy in the information! Extremely obliged for it, indeed! It will enable me, I hope, to rectify the gross errour of which I have been guilty; for I really did not know I had a young lady in my house, who was to make her will and taste the rule for mine! and, as I suppose, to have the goodness to direct my servants; as well as to take the trouble to manage me. I knew nothing of all this, I protest. I thought, on the contrary, I had engaged a young person, who would never think of taking such a liberty as to give her opinion; but who would do, as she ought, with

respect and submission, whatever I should indicate."—

"Good la, Ma'am," interrupted Mr. Giles: "Why that would be leading the life of a slave! And that, I suppose, is what they meant, all this time, by a toad-eater. However, don't look so ashamed, my pretty dear, for a toad-eater-maker is still worse! Fie, fie! What can rich people be thinking of, to lay out their money in buying their fellow-creatures' liberty of speech and thought! and then paying them for a bargain which they ought to despise them for selling?"

This unexpected retort turning the smiles of the assembly irresistibly against the lady of the mansion, she hastily renewed her desire that Juliet would sing.

"Sing, Ma'am?" cried Mr. Giles. "Why a merry-andrew could not do it, after being so affronted! Bless my heart! Tell a human being that she must only move to and fro, like a machine? Only say what she is bid, like a parrot? Em-

ploy her time, call forth her talents, exact her services, yet not let her make any use of her understanding? Neither say what she approves, nor object to what she dislikes? Poor, pretty young thing! You were never so much to be pitied, in the midst of your worst distresses, as when you were relieved upon such terms! Fie upon it, fie!—How can great people be so little?"

The mingled shame and resentment of Mrs. Ireton, at a remonstrance so extraordinary and so unqualified, were with difficulty kept within the bounds of decorum; for though she laughed, and affected to be extremely diverted, her laugh was so sharp, and forced, that it wounded every ear; and, through the amusement that she pretended to receive, it was obvious that she suffered torture, in restraining herself from ordering her servants to turn the orator out of the room.

With looks much softened, though in a manner scarcely less fervent, Mr.

Giles then, approaching Juliet, repeated, "Don't be cast down, I say, my pretty lady! You are none the worse for all this. The thing is but equal, at last; so we must not always look at the bad side of our fate. State every thing fairly; you have got your talents, your prettiness, and your winning ways,— but you want these ladies' wealth: they, have got their wealth, their grandeur, and their luxuries; but they want your powers of amusing. You can't well do without one another. So it's best be friends on both sides."

Mrs. Ireton, now, dying to give some vent to her spleen, darted the full venom of her angry eyes upon Juliet, and called out, "You don't see, I presume, Miss Ellis, what a condition Bijou has put that chair in? 'T would be too great a condescension for you, I suppose, just to give it a little pat of the hand, to shake off the crumbs? Though it is not your business, I confess! I confess that it is not your business! Perhaps, there-

fore, I am guilty of an indiscretion in giving you such a hint. Perhaps I had better let Lady Kendover, or Lady Arramede, or Mrs. Brinville, or any other of the ladies, sit upon the dirt, and soil their clothes? You may think, perhaps, that it will be for the advantage of the mercer, or the linen-draper? You may be considering the good of trade? or perhaps you may think I may do such sort of menial offices for myself?"

However generally power may cause timidity, arrogance, in every generous mind, awakens spirit; Juliet, therefore, raising her head, and, clearing her countenance, with a modest, but firm step, moved silently towards the door.

Astonished and offended, "Permit me, Madam," cried Mrs. Ireton; "permit me, Miss Ellis, — if it is not taking too great a liberty with a person of your vast consequence, — permit me to enquire who told you to go?"

Juliet turned back her head, and

quietly answered, " A person, Madam, who has not the honour to be known to you, — myself!" And then steadily left the room.

CHAPTER LVII.

AN answer so little expected, from one whose dependent state had been so freely discussed, caused a general surprize, and an almost universal demand of who the young person might be, and what she could mean. The few words that had dropt from her had as many commentators as hearers. Some thought their inference important; others, their mystery suspicious; and others mocked their assumption of dignity. Tears started into the eyes of Lady Barbara; while those of Sir Jaspar were fixed, meditatively, upon the head of his crutch; but the complacent smile of admiration, exhibited by Mr. Giles, attracted the notice of the whole assembly, by the peals of laughter which it excited in the Miss Crawleys.

With rage difficultly disguised without, but wholly ungovernable within, Mrs. Ireton would instantly have revenged what she considered as the most heinous affront that she had ever received, by expelling its author ignominiously from her house, but for the still sharpened curiosity with which her pretentions to penetration became piqued, from the general cry of "How very extraordinary that Mrs. Ireton has never been able to discover who she is!"

When Juliet, therefore, conceiving her removal from this mansion to be as inevitable, as her release from its tyranny was desirable, made known, as soon as the company was dispersed, that she was ready to depart; she was surprised by a request, from Mrs. Ireton, to stay a day or two longer; for the purpose of taking care of Mr. Loddard the following morning; as Mrs. Ireton, who had no one with whom she could trust such a charge, had engaged herself to join a party to see Arundel Castle.

Little as Juliet felt disposed to renew her melancholy wanderings, her situation in this house appeared to her so humiliating, nay degrading, that neither this message, nor the fawning civilities with which, at their next meeting, Mrs. Ireton sought to mitigate her late asperity, could prevail with her to consent to any delay beyond that which was necessary for obtaining the counsel of Gabriella; to whom she wrote a detailed account of what had passed; adding, " How long must I thus waste my time and my existence, separated from all that can render them valuable, while fastened upon by constant discomfort and disgust? O friend of my heart, friend of my earliest years, earliest feelings, juvenile happiness,— and, alas! maturer sorrows! why must we thus be sundered in adversity? Oh how, — with three-fold toil, should I revive by the side of my beloved Gabriella! — Dear to me by every tie of tender recollection; dear to me by the truest compassion for her

sufferings, and reverence for her resignation; and dear to me,—thrice dear! by the sacred ties of gratitude, which bind me for ever to her honoured mother, and to her venerated, saint-like uncle, my pious benefactor!"

She then tenderly proposed their immediate re-union, at whatever cost of fatigue, or risk, it might be obtained; and besought Gabriella to seek some small room, and to enquire for some needle-work; determining to appropriate to a journey to town, the little sum which she might have to receive for the long and laborious fortnight, which she had consigned to the terrible enterprize of aiming at amusing, serving, or interesting, one whose sole taste of pleasure consisted in seeking, like Strife, in Spenser's Fairy Queen, occasion for dissension.

With the apprehension, however, of losing, the desire of retaining her always revived; and now, as usual, proved some check to the recreations of spleen,

in which Mrs. Ireton ordinarily indulged herself. Yet, even in the midst of intended concession, the love of tormenting was so predominant, that, had the resolution of Juliet still wavered, whether to seek some new retreat, or still to support her present irksome situation, all indecision would have ceased from fresh disgust, at the sneers which insidiously found their way through every effort at civility. What had dropt from Mr. Giles Arbe, relative to the bank-notes, had excited curiosity in all; tinted, in some, with suspicion, and, in Mrs. Ireton, blended with malignity and wrath, that a creature whom she pleased herself to consider, and yet more to represent, as dependent upon her bounty for sustinence, should have any resources of her own. Nor was this displeasure wholly free from surmises the most disgraceful; though to those she forbore to give vent, conscious that to suggest them would stamp with impropriety all further inter-

course with their object. And a moment that offered new food for inquisition, was the last to induce Mrs. Ireton to relinquish her *protegée*. She confined her sarcasms, therefore, when she could not wholly repress them, to oblique remarks upon the happiness of those who were able to lay by private stores for secret purposes; lamenting that such was not her fate; yet congratulating herself that she might now sleep in peace, with respect to any creditors; since, should she be threatened with an execution, her house had a rich inmate, by whom she flattered herself that she should be assisted to give bail.

Already, the next morning, her resolution with regard to her nephew was reversed; and, the child desiring the change of scene, she gave directions that Miss Ellis should prepare herself to take him in charge during the excursion.

But Juliet was now initiated in the services and the endurance of an hum-

ble companion in public; she offered, therefore, to amuse and to watch him at home, but decidedly refused to attend him abroad; and her evident indifference whether to stay or begone herself, forced Mrs. Ireton to deny the humoured boy his intended frolic.

Little accustomed to any privation, and totally unused to disappointment, the young gentleman, when his aunt was preparing to depart, had recourse to his usual appeals against restraint or authority, clamourous cries and unappeasable blubbering. Juliet, to whose room he refused to mount, was called upon to endeavour to quiet him, and to entice him into the garden; that he might not hear the carriage of his aunt draw up to the door.

But this commission the refractory spirit of the young heir made it impossible to execute, till he overheard a whisper to Juliet, that she would take care, should Mr. Loddard chuse to go to the Temple, to place the silk-worms above his reach.

Suddenly, then, he sprang from his consolers and attendants, to run forward to the forbidden fruit; and, with a celerity that made it difficult for Juliet, even with her utmost speed, and longer limbs, to arrive at the spot, in time to prevent the mischief for which she saw him preparing. She had just, however, succeeded, in depositing the menaced insects upon a high bracket, when a footman came to whisper to her the commands of his lady, that she would detain Mr. Loddard till the party should be set off.

Before the man had shut himself out, Ireton, holding up his finger to him in token of secresy, slipt past him into the little building; and, having turned the key on the inside, and put it into his pocket, said, "I'll stand centinel for little Pickle!" and flung himself, loungingly, upon an arm-chair.

Confounded by this action, yet feeling it necessary to appear unintimidated, Juliet affected to occupy herself with the

silk-worms; of which the young gentleman now, eager to romp with Ireton, thought no more.

"At last, then, I have caught you, my skittish dear!" cried Ireton, while jumping about the little boy, to keep him in good humour. "I have had the devil of a difficulty to contrive it. However, I shall make myself amends now, for they are all going to Arundel Castle, and you and I can pass the morning together."

The indignant look which this boldness excited, he pretended not to observe, and went on.

"I can't possibly be easy without having a little private chat with you. I must consult you about my affairs. I want devilishly to make you my friend. You might be capitally useful to me. And you would find your account in it, I promise you. What sayst thee, my pretty one?"

Juliet, not appearing to hear him, changed the leaves of the silk-worms.

"Can you guess what it is brings me

hither to old madam my mother's? It is not you, with all your beauty, you arch prude; though I have a great enjoyment in looking at you and your blushes, which are devilishly handsome, I own; yet, to say the truth, you are not — all together — I don't know how it is — but you are not — upon the whole — quite exactly to my taste. Don't take it ill, my love, for you are a devilish fine girl. I own that. But I want something more skittish, more wild, more eccentric. If I were to fix my fancy upon such symmetry as you, I should be put out of my way every moment. I should always be thinking I had some Minerva tutoring, or some Juno awing me. It would not do at all. I want something of another cast; something that will urge me when I am hippish, without keeping me in order when I am whimsical. Something frisky, flighty, fantastic, — yet panting, blushing, dying with love for me! —"

Neither contempt nor indignation were of sufficient force to preserve the gravity of Juliet, at this unexpected ingenuousness of vanity.

"You smile?" he cried; "but if you knew what a deuced difficult thing it is, for a man who has got a little money, to please himself, you would find it a very serious affair. How the deuce can he be sure whether a woman, when once he has married her, would not, if her settlement be to her liking, dance at his funeral? The very thought of that would either carry me off in a fright within a month, or make me want to live for ever, merely to punish her. It's a hard thing having money! a deuced hard thing! One does not know who to trust. A poor man may find a wife in a moment, for if he sees any one that likes him, he knows it is for himself; but a rich man,—as Sir Jaspar says,—can never be sure whether the woman who marries him, would not, for the same pin-money, just as willingly follow

him to the outside of the church, as to the inside!"

At the name of Sir Jaspar, Juliet involuntarily gave some attention, though she would make no reply.

"From the time," continued Ireton, "that I heard him pronounce those words, I have never been able to satisfy myself; nor to find out what would satisfy me. At least not till lately; and now that I know what I want, the difficulty of the business is to get it! And this is what I wish to consult with you about; for you must know, my dear, I can never be happy without being adored."

Juliet, now, was surprised into suddenly looking at him, to see whether he were serious.

"Yes, adored! loved to distraction! I must be idolized for myself, myself alone; yet publicly worshiped, that all mankind may see,—and envy,—the passion I have been able to inspire!"

Suspecting that he meant some satire

upon Elinor, Juliet again fixed her eyes upon her silk-worms.

"So you don't ask me what it is that makes me so devilish dutiful all of a sudden, in visiting my mamma? You think, perhaps, I have some debts to pay? No; I have no taste for gaming. It's the cursedest fatiguing thing in the world. If one don't mind what one's about, one is blown up in a moment; and to be always upon one's guard, is worse than ruin itself. So I am upon no coaxing expedition, I give you my word. What do you think it is, then, that brings me hither? Cannot you guess?—Hay?—Why it is to arrange something, somehow or other, for getting myself from under this terrible yoke, that seems upon the point of enslaving me. My neck feels galled by it already! I have naturally no taste for matrimony. And now that the business seems to be drawing to a point, and I am called upon to name my lawyer, and cavilled with to declare, to the uttermost sixpence, what

I will do, and what I will give, to make my wife merry and comfortable upon my going out of the world, — I protest I shudder with horrour! I think there is nothing upon earth so mercenary, as a young nymph upon the point of becoming a bride!"

"Except, —" Juliet here could not resist saying, "except the man,—young or old, — who is her bridegroom!"

"O, that's another thing! quite another thing! A man must needs take care of his house, and his table, and all that: but the horridest thing I know, is the condition tied to a man's obtaining the hand of a young woman; he can never solicit it, but by giving her a prospect of his death-bed! And she never consents to live with him, till she knows what she may gain by his dying! 'Tis the most shocking style of making love that can be imagined. I don't like it, I swear! What, now, would you advise me to do?"

"I?"

"Yes; you know the scrape I am in, don't you? Sir Jaspar's estate, in case he should have no children, is entailed upon me; and, in case I should have none neither, is entailed upon a cousin; the heaviest dog you ever saw in your life, whom he hates and despises; and whom I wish at old Nick with all my heart, because I know he, and all his family, will wish me at the devil myself, if I marry; and, if I have children, will wish them and my wife there. I hate them all so heartily, that, whenever I think of them, I am ready, in pure spite, to be tied to the first girl that comes in my way: but, when I think of myself, I am taken with a fit of fright, and in a plaguey hurry to cut the knot off short. And this is the way I have got the character of a male jilt. But I don't deserve it, I assure you; for of all the females with whom I have had these little engagements, there is not one whom I have seriously thought of marrying, after the first half hour. They none of them hit my fancy further than to kill a little time."

The countenance of Juliet, though she neither deigned to speak nor to turn to him, marked such strong disapprobation, that he thought proper to add, "Don't be affronted for little Selina Joddrel: I really meant to marry her at the time; and I should really have gone on, and "buckled to," if the thing had been any way possible: but she turns out such a confounded little fool, that I can't think of her any longer."

"And was it necessary,—" Juliet could not refrain from saying, "to engage her first, and examine whether she could make you happy afterwards?"

"Why that seems a little awkward, I confess; but it's a way I have adopted. Though I took the decision, I own, rather in a hurry, with regard to little Selina; for it was merely to free myself from the reproaches of Sir Jaspar, who, because he is seventy-five, and does not know what to do with himself, is always regretting that he did not take a wife

when he was a stripling; and always at work to get me into the yoke. But, the truth is, I promised, when I went abroad, to bring him home a niece from France, or Italy; unless I went further east; and then I would look him out a fair Circassian. Now as he has a great taste for any thing out of the common way, and retains a constant hankering after Beauty, he was delighted with the scheme. But I saw nothing that would do! Nothing I could take to! The pretty ones were all too buckish; and the steady ones, a set of the yellowest frights I ever beheld."

"Alas for the poor ladies!"

"O, you are a mocker, are you?— So to lighten the disappointment to Sir Jaspar, I hit upon the expedient of taking up with little Selina, who was the first young thing that fell in my way. And I was too tired to be difficult. Besides, what made her the more convenient, was her extreme youth, which gave me a year to look about me,

and see if I could do any better. But she's a poor creature; a sad poor creature indeed! quite too bad. So I must make an end of the business as fast as possible. Besides, another thing that puts me in a hurry is,—the very devil would have it so!—but I have fallen in love with her sister!—"

Juliet, at a loss how to understand him, now raised her eyes; and, not without astonishment, perceived that he was speaking with a grave face.

"O that noble stroke! That inimitable girl! Happy, happy, Harleigh! That fellow fascinates the girls the more the less notice he takes of them! I take but little notice of them, neither; but, some how or other, they never do that sort of thing for me! If I could meet with one who would take such a measure for my sake, and before such an assembly,—I really think I should worship her!"

Then, lowering his voice, "You may be amazingly useful to me, my angel,"

he cried, "in this new affair. I know you are very well with Harleigh, though I don't know exactly how; but if,—nay, hear me before you look so proud! if you'll help me, a little, how to go to work with the divine Elinor, I'll bind myself down to make over to you,—in case of success,—mark that!—as round a sum as you may be pleased to name!"

The disdain of Juliet at this proposition was so powerful, that, though she heard it as the deepest of insults, indignation was but a secondary feeling; and a look of utter scorn, with a determined silence to whatever else he might say, was the only notice it received.

He continued, nevertheless, to address her, demanding her advice how to manage Harleigh, and her assistance how to conquer Elinor, with an air of as much intimacy and confidence, as if he received the most cordial replies. He purposed, he said, unless she could

counsel him to something better, making an immediate overture to Elinor; by which means, whether he should obtain, or not, the only girl in the world who knew how to love, and what love meant, he should, at least, in a very summary way, get rid of the little Selina.

Juliet knew too well the slightness of the texture of the regard of Selina for Ireton, to be really hurt at this defection; yet she was not less offended at being selected for the confidant of so dishonourable a proceeding; nor less disgusted at the unfeeling insolence by which it was dictated.

An attempt at opening the door at length silenced him, while the voice of Mrs. Ireton's woman called out, "Goodness! Miss Ellis, what do you lock yourself in for? My lady has sent me to you."

Juliet cast up her eyes, foreseeing the many disagreeable attacks and surmises to which she was made liable by this incident; yet immediately said aloud,

" Since you have thought proper, Mr. Ireton, to lock the door, for your own pleasure, you will, at least, I imagine, think proper to open it for that of Mrs. Ireton."

" Deuce take me if I do!" cried he, in a low voice: " manage the matter as you will! I have naturally no taste for a prude; so I always leave her to work her way out of a scrape as well as she can. But I'll see you again when they are all off." Then, throwing the key upon her lap, he softly and laughingly escaped out of the window.

Provoked and vexed, yet helpless, and without any means of redress, Juliet opened the door.

" Goodness! Miss Ellis," cried the Abigail, peeping curiously around, " how droll for you to shut yourself in! My lady sent me to ask whether you have seen any thing of Mr. Ireton in the garden, or about; for she has been ready to go ever so long, and he said he was setting off first on horseback; but his groom is

come, and is waiting for orders, and none of us can tell where he is."

"Mr. Ireton," Juliet quietly answered, "was here just now; and I doubt not but you will find him in the garden."

"Yes," cried the boy, "he slid out of the window."

"Goodness! was he in here, then, Master Loddard? Well! my lady'll be in a fine passion, if she should hear of it!"

This was enough to give the tidings a messenger: the boy darted forward, and reached the house in a moment.

The Abigail ran after him; Juliet, too, followed, dreading the impending storm, yet still more averse to remaining within the reach and power of Ireton. And the knowledge, that he would now, for the rest of the morning, be sole master of the house, filled her with such horrour, of the wanton calumny to which his unprincipled egotism might expose her, that, rather than continue under the same roof with a character so unfeelingly

audacious, she preferred risking all the mortifications to which she might be liable in the excursion to Arundel Castle.

Advanced already into the hall, dragged thither by her turbulent little nephew, and the hope of detecting the hiding-place of Ireton, stood the patroness whom she now felt compelled to soothe into accepting her attendance. Not aware of this purposed concession, and nearly as much frightened as enraged, to find with whom her son had been shut up, Mrs. Ireton, in a tone equally querulous and piqued, cried, "I beg you a thousand pardons, Ma'am, for the indiscretion of which I have been guilty, in asking for the honour of your company to Arundel Castle this morning! I ought to make a million of apologies for supposing that a young lady,—for you are a lady, no doubt! every body is à lady, now!—of your extraordinary turn and talents, could endure the insupportable insipidity of a tête à

tête with a female; or the dull care of a bantling; when a splendid, flashy, rich, young travelled gentleman, chusing, also, to remain behind, may be tired, and want some amusement! 'Twas grossly stupid of me, I own, to expect such a sacrifice. You, who, besides these prodigious talents, that make us all appear like a set of vulgar, uneducated beings by your side; you, who revel also, in the luxury of wealth; who wanton in the stores of Plutus; who are accustomed to the magnificence of unaccounted hoards!—How must the whole detail of our existence appear penurious, pitiful to you!—I am surprised how you can forbear falling into fits at the very sight of us! But I presume you reserve the brilliancy of an action of that *eclat*, for objects better worth your while to dazzle by a stroke of that grand description? I must have lost my senses, certainly, to so ill appreciate my own insignificance! I hope you'll pity me! that's all! I hope you will have so much unction as to pity me!"

If, at the opening of this harangue, the patience of Juliet nearly yielded to resentment, its length gave power to reflection,—which usually wants but time for checking impulse,—to point out the many and nameless mischiefs, to which quitting the house under similar suspicions might give rise. She quietly, therefore, answered, that though to herself it must precisely be the same thing, whether Mr. Ireton were at home or abroad, if that circumstance gave any choice to Mrs. Ireton, she would change her own plans, either to go or to stay, according to the directions which she might receive.

A superiority to accusation or surmize thus cool and decided, no sooner relieved the apprehensions of Mrs. Ireton by its evident innocence, than it excited her wrath by its deliberate indifference, if not contempt: and she would now disdainfully have rejected the attendance which, the moment before, she had anxiously desired, had not the little master of the house, who had seized the

opportunity of this harangue to make his escape, caught a glimpse of the carriage at the door; and put an end to all contest, by stunning all ears, with an unremitting scream till he forced himself into it; when, overpowering every obstacle, he obliged his aunt and Juliet to follow; while he issued his own orders to the postilion to drive to Arundel Castle.

Even the terrour of calumny, that most dangerous and baneful foe to unprotected woman! would scarcely have frightened Juliet into this expedition, had she been aware that, as soon as she was seated in the landau, with orders to take the whole charge of Mr. Loddard, the little dog, also, would have been given to her management. "Bijou will like to take the air," cried Mrs. Ireton, languidly; "and he will serve to entertain Loddard by the way. He can go very well on Miss Ellis's lap. Pretty little creature! 'Twould be cruel to leave him at home alone!"

This terrible humanity, which, in a hot day, in the middle of July, cast upon the knees of Juliet a fat, round, well furred, and over-fed little animal, accustomed to snarl, scratch, stretch, and roll himself about at his pleasure, produced fatigue the most pitiless, and inconvenience the most comfortless. The little tyrant of the party, whose will was law to the company, found no diversion so much to his taste, during the short journey, as exciting the churlish humour of his fellow-favourite, by pinching his ears, pulling his nose, filliping his claws, squeezing his throat, and twisting round his tail. And all these feats, far from incurring any reprimand, were laughed at and applauded. For whom did they incommode? No one but Miss Ellis; — and for what else was Miss Ellis there?

Yet this fatigue and disgust might have been passed over, as local evils, had they ceased with the journey; and had she then been at liberty to look at what

remains of the venerable old castle; to visit its ancient chapel; to examine the genealogical records of the long gallery; to climb up to the antique citadel, and to enjoy the spacious view thence presented of the sea: but she immediately received orders to give exercise to Bijou, and to watch that he ran into no danger: though Selina, who assiduously came forward to meet Mrs. Ireton, without appearing even to perceive Juliet, officiously took young Loddard in charge, and conducted him, with his aunt, to a large expecting party, long arrived, and now viewing the citadel.

CHAPTER LVIII.

RELIEVED, nevertheless, through whatever means effected, by a separation, Juliet, with her speechless, though far from mute companion, went forth to seek some obscure walk. But her purpose was defeated by the junction of a little spaniel, to which Bijou attached himself, with a fondness so tenacious, that her utmost efforts either to disengage them, or to excite both to follow her, were fruitless; Bijou would not quit the spaniel; nor the spaniel his post near the mansion.

Not daring to go on without her troublesome little charge, the approach of a carriage made her hasten to a garden-seat, upon which, though she could not be hidden, she might be less conspicuous.

The carriage, familiar to her from

having frequently seen it at Miss Matson's, was that of Sir Jaspar Herrington. Not satisfied, though she had no right to be angry, at the so measured politeness which he had shewn her the preceding day, when further notice would have softened her mortifying embarrassment, she was glad that he had not remarked her in passing.

She heard him enquire for Mrs. Ireton's party, which he had promised to join; but, affrighted at the sound of the citadel, he said that he would alight, and wait upon some warm seat in the grounds.

In descending from his chaise, one of his crutches fell, and a bonbonniere, of which the contents were dispersed upon the ground, slipt from the hand of his valet. It was then, and not without chagrin, that Juliet began further to comprehend the defects of a character which she had thought an entire composition of philanthropy and courtesy. He reviled rather than scolded the servant to whom the

accident had happened; and treated the circumstance as an event of the first importance. He cast an equal share of blame, and with added sharpness, upon the postilion, for not having advanced an inch nearer to the stone-steps; and uttered invectives even virulent against the groom, that he had not come forward to help. Angry, because vexed, with all around, he used as little moderation in his wrath, as reason in his reproaches.

How superficially, thought Juliet, can we judge of dispositions, where nothing is seen but what is meant to be shewn! where nothing is pronounced but what is prepared for being heard! Had I fixed my opinion of this gentleman only upon what he intended that I should witness, I should have concluded that he had as much urbanity of humour as of manners. I could never have imagined, that the most trifling of accidents could, in a moment, destroy the whole harmony of his temper!

In the midst of the choleric harangue of the Baronet, against which no one ventured to remonstrate, the little dogs came sporting before him; and, recollecting Bijou, he hastily turned his head towards the person upon the garden-seat, whom he had passed without any attention, and discerned Juliet.

He hobbled towards her without delay, warmly expressing his delight at so auspicious a meeting: but the air and look, reserved and grave, with which, involuntarily, she heard him, brought to his consciousness, what the pleasure of her sight had driven from it, his enraged attack upon his servants; which she must unavoidably have witnessed, and of which her countenance shewed her opinion.

He stood some moments silent, leaning upon his crutches, and palpably disconcerted. Then, shrugging his shoulders, with a half smile, but a piteous look, "Many," he cried, "are the tricks which my quaint little imps

have played me! many, the quirks and villainous wiles I owe them!—but never yet, with all the ingenuity of their malice, have they put me to shame and confusion such as this!"

Rising to be gone, yet sorry for him, and softened, the disapprobation of Juliet was mingled with a concern, from her disposition to like him, that made its expression, in the eyes of her old admirer, seem something nearly divine. He looked at her with reverence and with regret, but made no attempt to prevent her departure. To separate, however, the dogs, or induce the spaniel to go further, she still found impossible; and, not daring to abandon Bijou, was fain quietly to seat herself again, upon a garden-chair, nearer to the house.

Sir Jaspar, for some minutes, remained, pensively, upon the spot where she had left him; then, again shrugging his shoulders, as if bemoaning his ill luck, and again hobbling after her, "There is nothing," he cried, "that

makes a man look so small, as a sudden self-conviction that he merits ridicule or disgrace! what intemperance would be averted, could we believe ourselves always,—not only from above, but by one another, overheard! Don't take an aversion to me, however! nor suppose me worse than I am; nor worse than the herd of mankind. You have but seen an old bachelor in his true colours! Not with the gay tints, not with the spruce smiles, not with the gallant bows, the courteous homage, the flowery flourishes, with which he makes himself up for shew; but with the grim colouring of factious age, and suspicious egotism!"

The countenance of Juliet shewing her now to be shocked that she had given rise to these apologies, that of Sir Jaspar brightened; and, dragging a chair to her side, "I came hither," he cried, "in the fair hope to seize one of those happy moments, that the fates, now and then, accord to favoured mor-

tals, for holding interesting and dulcet discourse, with the most fascinating enchantress that a long life, filled up with fastidious, perhaps fantastic researches after female excellence, has cast in my way. Would not one have thought 'twas some indulgent sylph that directed me? that inspired me with the idea, and then seconded the inspiration, by contriving that my arrival should take place at the critical instant, when that syren was to be found alone? Who could have suspected 'twas but the envious stratagem of some imp of darkness and spite, devised purely to expose a poor antiquated soul, with all his infirmities, physical and moral, to your contempt and antipathy?"

Peering now under her hat, his penetrating eyes discerned so entire a change in his favour, that he completely recovered his pleasantry, his quaint archness, and his gallantry.

"If betrayed," he continued, "by these perfidious elves, where may a

poor forlorn solitary wight, such as I am, find a counsellor? He has no bosom friend, like the happy mortal, whose kindly star has guided him to seek, in lively, all-attractive youth, an equal partner for melancholy, all revolting age! He has no rising progeny, that, inheritors of his interests, naturally share his difficulties. He has nothing at hand but mercenary dependents. Nothing at heart but jealous suspicion of others, or secret repining for himself! Such, fair censurer! such is the natural state of that unnatural character, an old bachelor! How, then, when not upon his guard, or, in other words, when not urged by some outward object, some passing pleasure, or some fairy hope,— how,— tell me, in the candour of your gentle conscience! how can you expect from so decrepit and unwilling a hermit, the spontaneous benevolence of youth?"

"But what is it I have said, Sir," cried Juliet smiling, "that makes you denounce me as a censurer?"

"What is it you have said? ask, rather, what is it you have not said, with those eyes that speak with an eloquence that a thousand tongues might emulate in vain? They administered to me a lesson so severe, because just, that, had not a little pity, which just now beamed from them, revived me, the malignant goblins, who delight in drawing me into these scrapes, might have paid for their sport by losing their prey! But what invidious little devils ensnare me even now, into this superannuated folly, of prating about so worn out an old subject, when I meant only to name a being bright, blooming, and juvenile?"

The recollection of his nearly complete neglect, the preceding day, in presence of Mrs. Ireton, and her society, again began to cloud the countenance of Juliet, as she listened to compliments thus reserved for private delivery. Sir Jaspar soon penetrated into what passed in her mind, and, yet again shrugging

his shoulders, and resuming the sorrowful air of a self-convicted culprit, "Alas!" he cried, "under what pitiful star did I first begin limping upon this nether sphere? And what foul fiend is it, that, taking upon him the name of worldly cunning, has fashioned my conduct, since here I have been hopping and hobbling? I burned, yesterday, with desire to make public my admiration of the fair flower, that I saw nearly trampled under foot; and I should have considered as the most propitious moment of my life, that in which I had raised its drooping head, by withering, with a blast, all the sickly, noxious surrounding weeds: but those little devils, that never leave me quiet, kept twitching and tweaking me every instant, with representations of prudence and procrastination; with the danger of exciting observation; and the better judgment of obtaining a little private discourse, previous to any public display."

Not able to divine to what this might

be the intended prelude, Juliet was silent. Sir Jaspar, after some hesitation, continued.

"In that motley assembly, you had two antique friends, equally cordial, and almost equally admiring and desirous to serve you; but by different means,—perhaps with different views! one of them, stimulated by the little fairy elves, that alternately enlighten and mislead him, not seeing yet his way, and embarrassed in his choice of measures, was lying in wait, cautiously to avail himself of the first favourable moment, for soliciting your fair leave to dub himself your knight-errant; the other, urged solely, perhaps, by good-nature and humanity, with an happy absence of mind, that precludes circumspection; coming forward in your defence, and for your honour, with unsuspecting, unfearing, untemporising zeal. Alas! in my conscience, which these tormenting little imps are for ever goading on, to inflict upon me some disagreeable compliment,

I cannot, all simple as he is, but blush to view the intrinsic superiority of the unsophisticated man of nature, over the artificial man of the world! How much more truly a male character."

Looking at her then with examining earnestness, "To which of these antediluvian wights," he continued, "you will commit the gauntlet, that must be flung in your defence, I know not; either of us,—alas!—might be your great grandfather! But, helpless old captives as we are in your chains, we each feel a most sincere, nay, inordinate desire, to break those fetters with which, at this moment, you seem yourself to be shackled. And for this I am not wholly without a scheme, though it is one that demands a little previous parleying."

Juliet positively declined his services; but gratefully acknowledged those from which she had already, though involuntarily, profited.

"You cannot, surely," he cried, "have a predilection for your present species

of existence? and, least of all, under the galling yoke of this spirit-breaking dame, into whose ungentle power I cannot see you fallen without losing sleep, appetite, and pleasure. How may I conjure you into better hands? How release you from such bondage? And yet, this pale, withered, stiff, meágre hag, so odious, so tyrannical, so irascible, but a few years, — in my calculation! — but a few years since, — had all the enchantment of blithe, blooming loveliness! You, who see her only in her decline, can never believe it; but she was eminently fair, gay, and charming!"

Juliet looked at him, astonished.

"Her story," he continued, "already envelopes the memoirs of a Beauty, in her four stages of existence. During childhood, indulged in every wish; admired where she should have been chidden, caressed where she should have been corrected; coaxed into pettishness, and spoilt into tyranny. In youth, adored, followed, and applauded till, involun-

tarily, rather than vainly, she believed herself a goddess. In maturity, — ah! there's the test of sense and temper in the waning beauty! — in maturity, shocked and amazed to see herself supplanted by the rising bloomers; to find that she might be forgotten, or left out, if not assiduous herself to come forward; to be consulted only upon grave and dull matters, out of the reach of her knowledge and resources; alternately mortified by involuntary negligence, and affronted by reverential respect! Such has been her maturity; such, amongst faded beauties, is the maturity of thousands. In old age, — if a lady may be ever supposed to suffer the little loves and graces to leave her so woefully in the lurch, as to permit her to know such a state; — in old age, without stores to amuse, or powers to instruct, though with a full persuasion that she is endowed with wit, because she cuts, wounds, and slashes from unbridled, though pent-up resentment, at

her loss of adorers; and from a certain perverseness, rather than quickness of parts, that gifts her with the sublime art of ingeniously tormenting; with no consciousness of her own infirmities, or patience for those of others; she is dreaded by the gay, despised by the wise, pitied by the good, and shunned by all."

Then, looking at Juliet with a strong expression of surprise, "What Will o'the Wisp," he cried, "has misled you into this briery thicket of brambles, nettles, and thorns? where you cannot open your mouth but you must be scratched; nor your ears, but you must be wounded; nor stir a word but you must be pricked and worried? How is it that, with the most elegant ideas, the most just perceptions upon every subject that presents itself, you have a taste so whimsical?"

"A taste? Can you, then, Sir, believe a fate like mine to have any connexion with choice?"

"What would you have me believe,

fair Ænigma? Tell me, and I will fashion my credulity to your commands. But I only hear of you with Mrs. Maple; I only see you with Mrs. Ireton! Mrs. Maple, having weaker parts, may have less power, scientifically, to torment than Mrs. Ireton; but nature has been as active in personifying ill will with the one, as art in embellishing spite with the other. They are equally egotists, equally wrapt up in themselves, and convinced that self alone is worth living for in this nether world. What a fate! To pass from Maple to Ireton, was to fall from Scylla to Charybdis!"

The blush of Juliet manifested extreme confusion, to see herself represented, even though it might be in sport, as a professional parasite. Reading, with concern, in her countenance, the pain which he had caused her, he exclaimed, "Sweet witch! loveliest syren!—let me hasten to develope a project, inspired, I must hope, by my better genius! Tell me but, frankly, who and what you are, and then —"

Juliet shook her head.

"Nay, nay, should your origin be the most obscure, I shall but think you more nearly allied to the gods! Jupiter, Apollo, and such like personages, delighted in a secret progeny. If, on the contrary, in sparkling correspondence with your eyes, it is brilliant, but has been clouded by fortune, how ravished shall I be to twirl round the wheels of that capricious deity, till they reach those dulcet regions, where beauty and merit are in harmony with wealth and ease! Tell me, then, what country first saw you bloom; what family originally reared you; by what name you made your first entrance into the world;—and I will turn your champion against all the spirits of the air, all the fiends of the earth, and all the monsters of the "vast abyss!" Leave, then, to such as need those goaders, the magnetism of mystery and wonder, and trust, openly and securely, to the charm of youth, the fascination of intelligence, the enchant-

ment of grace, and the witchery of beauty!"

Juliet was still silent.

"I see you take me for a vain, curious old caitiff, peeping, peering and prying into business in which I have no concern. Charges such as these are ill cleared by professions; let me plead, therefore, by facts. Should there be a person,—young, rich, *à la mode*, and not ugly; whose expectations are splendid, who moves in the sphere of high life, who could terminate your difficulties with honour, by casting at your feet that vile dross, which, in fairy hands, such as yours, may be transmuted into benevolence, generosity, humanity,—if such a person there should be, who in return for these grosser and more substantial services, should need the gentler and more refined ones of soft society, mild hints, guidance unseen, admonition unpronounced;—would you, and could you, in such a case, condescend to reciprocate advantages, and

their reverse? Would you, — and could you, — if snatched from unmerited embarrassments, to partake of luxuries which your acceptance would honour, bear with a little coxcomical nonsense, and with a larger portion, still, of unmeaning perverseness, and malicious nothingness? I need not, I think, say, that the happy mortal whom I wish to see thus charmed and thus formed, is my nephew Ireton."

Uncertain whether he meant to mock or to elevate her, Juliet simply answered, that she had long, though without knowing why, found Mr. Ireton her enemy; but had never foreseen that an ill will as unaccountable as it was unprovoked, would have extended so far, and so wide, as to spread all around her the influence of irony and derision.

"Hold, hold! fair infidel," — cried Sir Jaspar, "unless you mean to give me a fit of the gout."

He then solemnly assured her, that

he was so persuaded that her excellent understanding, and uncommon intelligence, united, in rare junction, with such youth and beauty, would make her a treasure to a rich and idle young man, whose character, fluctuating between good and bad, or rather between something and nothing, was yet unformed; that, if she would candidly acknowledge her real name, story, and situation, he should merely have to utter a mysterious injunction to Ireton, that he must see her no more, in order to bring him to her feet. "He acts but a part," continued the Baronet, "in judging you ill. He piques himself upon being a man of the world, which, he persuades himself, he manifests to all observers, by a hardy, however vague spirit of detraction and censoriousness; deeming, like all those whose natures have not a kindlier bent, suspicion to be sagacity."

Juliet was entertained by this singular plan, yet frankly acknowledged, after

repeating her thanks, that it offered her no temptation; and continued immoveable, to either address or persuasion, for any sort of personal communication.

A pause of some minutes ensued, during which Sir Jaspar seemed deliberating how next to proceed. He then said, "You are decided not to hear of my nephew? He is not, I confess, deserving you; but who is? Yet,—a situation such as this, — a companion such as Mrs. Ireton, — any change must surely be preferable to a fixture of such a sort? What, then, must be done? Where youth, youth itself, even when joined to figure and to riches, is rejected, how may it be hoped that age, — age and infirmity! — even though joined with all that is gentlest in kindness, all that is most disinterested in devotion, may be rendered more acceptable?"

Confused, and perplexed how to understand him, Juliet was rising, under pretence of following Bijou; but Sir Jaspar, fastening her gown to the grass

by his two crutches, laughingly said, "Which will you resist most stoutly? your own cruelty, or the kindness of my little fairy friends? who, at this moment, with a thousand active gambols, are pinning, gluing, plaistering, in sylphick mosaic-work, your robe between the ground and my sticks; so that you cannot tear it away without leaving me, at least, some little memorial that I have had the happiness of seeing you!"

Forced either to struggle or to remain in her place, she sat still, and he continued.

"Don't be alarmed, for I shall certainly not offend you. Listen, then, with indulgence, to what I am tempted to propose, and, whether I am impelled by my evil genius, or inspired by my guardian angel ——"

Juliet earnestly entreated him to spare her any proposition whatever; but vainly; and he was beginning, with a fervour almost devout, an address to all

the sylphs, elves, and aeriel beings of his fanciful idolatry, when a sudden barking from Bijou making him look round, he perceived that Mrs. Ireton, advancing on tiptoe, was creeping behind his garden-chair.

Confounded by an apparition so unwished, he leant upon his crutches, gasping and oppressed for breath; while Juliet, to avoid the attack of which the malevolence of Mrs. Ireton's look was the sure precursor, would have retreated, had not her gown been so entangled in the crutches of Sir Jaspar, that she could not rise without leaving him the fragment that he had coveted. In vain she appealed with her eyes for release; his consternation was such, that he saw only, what least he wished to see, the scowling brow of Mrs. Ireton; who, to his active imagination, appeared to be Megara herself, just mounted from the lower regions.

"Well! this is really charming! Quite edifying, I protest!" burst forth Mrs.

Ireton, when she found that she was discovered. "This is a sort of intercourse I should never have divined! You'll pardon my want of discernment! I know I am quite behind hand in observation and remark; but I hope, in time, and with so much good instruction, I may become more sagacious. I am glad, however, to see that I don't disturb you Miss Ellis! Extremely glad to find that you treat me in so friendly a way, and keep your place so amiably without ceremony. I am quite enchanted to be upon terms so familiar and agreeable with you. I may sit down myself, I suppose, upon the grass, meanwhile! 'Twill be really very rural! very rural and pretty!"

Juliet now could no longer conceal her confined situation, for, pinioned to her place, she was compelled to petition the Baronet to set her at liberty.

The real astonishment of Mrs. Ireton, upon discovering the cause and means of her detention, was far less amusing to

herself, than that which she had affected, while concluding her presumptuous *protegée* to be a voluntary intruder upon the time, and encroacher upon the politeness of the Baronet. Her eyes now opened, with alarm, to a confusion so unusual in her severe and authoritative brother-in-law; whom she was accustomed to view awing others, not himself awed. Suggestions of the most unpleasant nature occurred to her suspicious mind; and she stood as if thunderstruck in her turn, in silent suspension how to act, or what next to say; till Selina came running forward, to announce that all the company was gone to look at the Roman Catholic chapel; and to enquire whether Mrs. Ireton did not mean to make it a visit.

If Sir Jaspar, Mrs. Ireton hesitatingly answered, would join the party, she would attend him with pleasure.

Sir Jaspar heard not this invitation. In his haste to give Juliet her freedom,

his feeble hands, disobedient to his will, and unable to second the alacrity of his wishes, struck his crutches through her gown; and they were now both, and in equal confusion, employed in disentangling it; and ashamed to look up, or to speak.

Selina, perceiving their position, with the unmeaning glee of a childish love of communication, ran, tittering, away, to tell it to Miss Brinville; who, saying that there was nothing worth seeing in the Roman Catholic chapel, was sauntering after Mrs. Ireton, in hopes of finding entertainment more congenial to her mind.

The sight of this lady, restored to Mrs. Ireton the scoffing powers which amazement, mingled with alarm, had momentarily chilled; and, as Miss Brinville peeringly approached, to verify the whisper of Selina, exclaiming, "Dear! what makes poor Sir Jaspar stoop so?" his loving sister-in-law answered, "Sir Jaspar, Miss Brinville?

What can Sir Jaspar do? I beg pardon for the question, but what can a gentleman do, when a young woman happens to take a fancy to place herself so near him, that he can't turn round without incommoding her? Not that I mean to blame Miss Ellis. I hope I know better. I hope I shall never be guilty of such injustice; for how can Miss Ellis help it? What could she do? Where could she turn herself in so confined a place as this? in so narrow a piece of ground? How could she possibly find any other spot for repose?"

A contemptuous smile at Juliet from Miss Brinville, shewed that lady's approbation of this witty sally; and the junction of Mrs. Maple, whose participation in this kind of enjoyment was known to be lively and sincere, exalted still more highly the spirit of poignant sarcasm in Mrs. Ireton; who, with smiles of ineffable self-complacency, went on, "There are peopl[illegible] indeed,—I am afraid, —I don't know, b[illegible] I am afraid so,—there

are people who may have the ill nature to think, that the charge of walking out a little delicate animal in the grounds, did not imply an absolute injunction to recline, with lounging elegance, upon an easy chair. There are people, I say, who may have so little intelligence as to be of that way of thinking. 'Tis being abominably stupid, I own, but there's no enlightening vulgar minds! There is no making them see the merit of quitting an animal for a gentleman; especially for a gentleman in such penury; who has no means to recompense any attentions with which he may be indulged."

Juliet, more offended, now, even than confused, would willingly have torn her gown to hasten her release; but she was still sore, from the taunts of Mrs. Ireton, upon a recent similar mischief.

They were presently joined by the Arramedes; and Mrs. Ireton, secure of new admirers, felt her powers of pleasantry encrease every moment.

" I hope I shall never fail to acknowledge," she continued, " how supremely I am indebted to those ladies who have had the goodness to recommend this young person to me. I can never repay such kindness, certainly; that would be vastly beyond my poor abilities; for she has the generosity to take an attachment to all that belong to me! It was only this morning that she had the goodness to hold a private conference with my son. Nobody could tell where to find him. He seemed to have disappeared from the whole house. But no! he had only, as Mr. Loddard afterwards informed me, stept into the Temple, with Miss Ellis."

Sir Jaspar now, surprised and shocked, lifted up his eyes; but their quick penetration instantly read innocence in the indignation expressed in those of Juliet.

Mrs. Ireton, however, saw only her own triumph, in the malicious simpers of Miss Brinville, the spiteful sneers of Mrs. Maple, and the haughty scorn of Lady Arramede.

Charmed, therefore, with her brilliant success, she went on.

"How I may be able to reward kindness so extraordinary, I can't pretend to say. I am so stupid, I am quite at a loss what to devize that may be adequate to such services; for the attentions bestowed upon my son in the morning, I see equally displayed to his uncle at noon. Though there is some partiality, I think, too, shewn to Ireton. I won't affirm it; but I am rather afraid there is some partiality shewn to Ireton; for though the conference has been equally interesting, I make no doubt, with Sir Jaspar, it has not had quite so friendly an appearance. The open air is very delightful, to be sure; and a beautiful prospect helps to enliven one's ideas; but still, there is something in complete retirement that seems yet more romantic and amicable. Ireton was so impressed with this idea, as I am told; for I don't pretend to speak from my own personal knowledge upon subjects of

so much importance; but I am told, — Mr. Loddard informs me, that Ireton was so sensible to the advantage of having the honours of an exclusive conference, that he not only chose that retired spot, but had the precaution, also, to lock the door. I don't mean to assert this! it may be all a mistake, perhaps. Miss Ellis can tell best."

Neither the steadiness of innate dignity, nor the fearlessness of conscious innocence, could preserve Juliet from a sensation of horrour, at a charge which she could not deny, though its implications were false and even atrocious. She saw, too, that, at the words "lock the door," Sir Jaspar again raised his investigating eyes, in which there was visibly a look of disturbance. She would not, however, deign to make a vindication, lest she should seem to acknowledge it possible that she might be thought culpable; but, being now disengaged, she silently, and uncontrollably hurt, walked away.

" And pray, Ma'am," said Mrs. Ireton, " if the question is not too impertinent, don't you see Mr. Loddard coming? And who is to take care of Bijou?" And where is his basket? And I don't see his cushion?"

Juliet turned round to answer, " I will send them Madam, immediately."

" Amazing condescension! exclaimed Mrs. Ireton, in a rage that she no longer aimed at disguising: " I shall never be able to shew my sense of such affability! Never! I am vastly too obtuse, vastly too obtuse and impenetrable to find any adequate means of expressing my gratitude. However, since you really intend me the astonishing favour of sending one of my people upon your own errand, permit me to entreat,—if it is not too great a liberty to take with a person of your unspeakable rank,—permit me to entreat that you will make use of the same vehicle for conveying to me your account; for you are vastly too fine a lady for a person so ordinary

as I am to keep under her roof. I have no such ambition, I assure you; not an intention of the kind. So pray let me know what retribution I am to make for your trouble. You have taken vast pains, I imagine, to serve me and please me. I imagine so! I must be prodigiously your debtor, I make no doubt!"

"What an excess of impertinence!" cried Lady Arramede.

"She'll never know her place," said Mrs. Maple: "'tis quite in vain to try to serve such a body."

"I never saw such airs in my life!" exclaimed Miss Brinville.

Juliet could endure no more. The most urgent distress seemed light and immaterial, when balanced against submission to treatment so injurious. She walked, therefore, straight forward to the castle, for shelter, immediate shelter, from this insupportable attack; disengaging herself from the spoilt little boy, who strove, nay cried to drag her

back; forcing away from her the snarling cur, who would have followed her; and decidedly mute to the fresh commands of Mrs. Ireton, uttered in tones of peremptory, but vain authority.

CHAPTER LIX.

OFFENDED, indignant; escaped, yet without safety; free, yet without refuge; Juliet, hurried into the noble mansion, with no view but to find an immediate hiding-place, where, unseen, she might allow some vent to her wounded feelings, and, unmarked, remain till the haughty party should be gone, and she could seek some humble conveyance for her own return.

Concluding her in haste for some commission of Mrs. Ireton's, the servants let her pass nearly unobserved; and she soon came to a long gallery, hung with genealogical tables of the Arundel family, and with various religious reliques, and historical curiosities.

Believing herself alone, and in a place of which the stillness suited her desire

of solitude and concealment, she had already shut the door before she saw her mistake. What, then, was her astonishment, what her emotion, when she discerned, seated, and examining a part of the hangings, at the further end of the gallery, the gentle form of Lady Aurora Granville!

Sudden transport, though mingled with a thousand apprehensions, instantly converted every dread that could depress into every hope that could revive her. A start evinced that she was seen. She endeavoured to courtesy, and would have advanced; but, the first moment over, fear, uncertainty, and conflicting doubts took place of its joy, and robbed her of force. Her dimmed eyes perceived not the smiling pleasure with which Lady Aurora had risen at her approach; her breast heaved quick; her heart swelled almost to suffocation; and, wholly disordered, she leaned against a window-frame cut in the immensely thick walls of the castle.

Lady Aurora now ran fleetly forward, exclaiming, in a voice of which the tender melody spoke the softness of her soul, "Miss Ellis! My dear Miss Ellis! have I, indeed, the happiness to meet with you again? O! if you could know how I have desired, have pined for it!—But,—are you ill?—You cannot be angry? Miss Ellis! sweet Miss Ellis! Can you ever have believed that it has been my fault that I have appeared so unkind, so hard, so cruel?"

With a fulness of joy that, in conquering doubt, overpowered timidity, Juliet now, with rapturous tears, and resistless tenderness, flung herself upon the neck of Lady Aurora, whom she encircled with her arms, and strained fondly to her bosom.

But the same vent that gave relief to internal oppression brought her to a sense of external impropriety: she felt that it was rather her part to receive than to bestow such marks of affection. She drew back; and her cheeks were

suffused with the most vivid scarlet, when she observed the deep colour which died those of Lady Aurora at this action; though evidently with the blushes of surprise, not of pride.

Ashamed, and hanging her head, Juliet would have attempted some apology; but Lady Aurora, warmly returning her embrace, cried, "How happy, and how singular a chance that we should have fixed upon this day for visiting Arundel-castle! We have been making a tour to the Isle of Wight and to Portsmouth; and we did not intend to go to Brighthelmstone; so that I had no hope, none upon earth, of such a felicity as that of seeing my dear Miss Ellis. I need not, I think, say it was not I who formed our plan, when I own that we had no design to visit Brighthelmstone, though I knew, from Lady Barbara Frankland, that Miss Ellis was there?"

"Alas! I fear," answered Juliet, "the design was to avoid Brighthelmstone!

and to avoid it lest a blessing such as I now experience should fall to my lot! Ah, Lady Aurora! by the pleasure,—the transport, rather, with which your sudden sight has made me appear to forget myself, judge my anguish, my desolation, to be banished from your society, and banished as a criminal!"

Lady Aurora shuddered and hid her face. "O Miss Ellis!" she cried, "what a word! never may I hear it,—so applied,—again, lest it should alienate me from those I ought to respect and esteem! and you so good, so excellent, would be sorry to see me estrange myself, even though it were for your own sake, from those to whom I owe gratitude and attachment. I must try to shew my admiration of Miss Ellis in a manner that Miss Ellis herself will not condemn. And will not that be by speaking to her without any disguise? And will she not have the goodness to encourage me to do it? For the world I would not take a liberty with her;—

for the universe I would not hurt her! — but if it were possible she could condescend to give, ... however slightly, however imperfectly, some little explanation to .... to ... Mrs. Howel ....."

Juliet here, with a strong expression of horrour, interrupted her: "Mrs. Howel? — O no! I cannot speak with Mrs. Howel! — I had nearly said I can see Mrs. Howel no more! But happier days would soon subdue resentment. And, indeed, what I feel even now, may more justly be called terrour. Appearances have so cruelly misrepresented me, that I have no right to be indignant, nor even surprised that they should give rise to false judgments. I have no right to expect, — in a second instance, — unknown, friendless, lonely as I am! a trusting angel! a Lady Aurora!"

The tears of Lady Aurora now flowed as fast as her own. "If I have been so fortunate," she cried, "as to inspire such sweet kindness in so noble a mind, even in the midst of its unhappiness, I

shall always prize it as the greatest of honours, and try to use it so as to make me become better; that you may never wound me by retracting it, nor be wounded yourself by being ashamed of your partiality."

With difficulty Juliet now forbore casting herself at the feet of Lady Aurora, the hem of whose garment she would have kissed with extacy, had not her own pecuniary distresses, and the rank of her young friend, made her recoil from what might have the semblance of flattery. She attempted not to speak; conscious of the inadequacy of all that she could utter for expressing what she felt, she left to the silent eloquence of her streaming, yet transport-glittering eyes, the happy task of demonstrating her gratitude and delight.

With calmer, though extreme pleasure, Lady Aurora perceived the impression which she had made. "See," she cried, again embracing her; "see whether I trust in your kindness, when

I venture, once more, to renew my earnest request, my entreaty, my petition—"

"O! Lady Aurora! Who can resist you? Not I! I am vanquished! I will tell you all! I will unbosom myself to you entirely!"

"No, my Miss Ellis, no! not to me! I will not even hear you! Have I not said so? And what should make me change? All I have been told by Lady Barbara Frankland of your exertions, has but increased my admiration; all she has written of your sufferings, your disappointments, and the patient courage with which you have borne them, has but more endeared you to my heart. No explanation can make you fairer, clearer, more perfect in my eyes. I take, indeed, the deepest interest in your welfare; but it is an interest that makes me proud to wait, not curious to hear; proud, my Miss Ellis, to shew my confidence, my trust in your excellencies! If, therefore, you will have the goodness to speak, it

must be to others, not to me! I should blush to be of the number of those who want documents, certificates, to love and honour you!"

Again Juliet was speechless; again all words seemed poor, heartless, unworthy to describe the sensibility of her soul, at this touching proof of a tenderness so consonant to her wishes, yet so far surpassing her dearest expectations. She hung over her ingenuous young friend; she sighed, she even sobbed with unutterable delight; while tears of rapture rolled down her glowing cheeks, and while her eyes were lustrous with a radiance of felicity that no tears could dim.

Charmed, and encouraged, Lady Aurora continued: "To those, then, who have not had the happiness to see you so justly; who dwell only upon the singularity of your being so . . . . alone, and so . . . . young,—O how often have I told them that I was sure you as little knew as merited their evil constructions! How often have I wished to

write to you! how certain have I felt that all your motives to concealment, even the most respectable, would yield to so urgent a necessity, as that of clearing away every injurious surmise! Speak, therefore, my Miss Ellis, though not to me! Even from them, when you have trusted them, I will hear nothing till the time of your secresy is over; that I may give them an example of the discretion they must observe with others. Yet speak! have the goodness to speak, that every body, — my uncle Denmeath himself, — and even Mrs. Howel, — may acknowledge and respect your excellencies and your virtues as I do! And then, my Miss Ellis, who shall prevent,— who will even desire to prevent my shewing to the whole world my sense of your worth, and my pride in your friendship?"

The struggles that now heaved the breast of Juliet were nearly too potent for her strength. She gasped for breath; she held her hand to her

heart; and when, at length, the kind caresses and gentle pleadings of Lady Aurora, brought back her speech, she painfully pronounced, "Shall I repay goodness so exquisite, by filling with regret the sweet mind that intends me only honour and consolation? Must the charm of such unexpected kindness, even while it penetrates my heart with almost piercing delight, entail, from its resistless persuasion, a misery upon the rest of my days, that may render them a burthen from which I may hourly sigh, — nay pray, to be delivered?"

Seized with horrour and astonishment, Lady Aurora exclaimed, "Oh heaven, no! I must be a monster if I would not rather die, immediately die, than cause you any evil! Miss Ellis, my dear Miss Ellis! forget I have made such a request, and forgive my indiscretion! With all your misfortunes, Miss Ellis, all your so undeserved griefs, you are yet quite a stranger to sorrow,

compared to that which I should experience, if, through me, through my means, you should be exposed to any fresh injury!"

"Angelic goodness!" cried Juliet, deeply affected: "I blush, I blush to hear you without casting myself entirely into your power, without making you immediate arbitress of my fate! Yet,—since you demand not my confidence for your own, satisfaction,—can I know that to spread it beyond yourself,—your generous self!—might involve me in instantaneous earthly destruction, and, voluntarily, suffer your very benevolence to become its instrument? With regard to Lord Denmeath,—to your uncle,—I must say nothing; but with regard to Mrs. Howel,—let me conjure your ladyship to consent to my utterly avoiding her, that I may escape the dreadful accusations and reproaches that my cruel situation forbids me to repel. I have no words to paint the terrible impression she has left upon my mind.

All that I have borne from others is short of what I have suffered from that lady! The debasing suspicions of Mrs. Maple, the taunting tyranny of Mrs. Ireton, though they make me blush to owe, — or rather, to earn from them the subsistence without which I know not how to exist; have yet never smote so rudely and so acutely to my inmost heart, as the attack I endured from Mrs. Howel! They rob me, indeed, of comfort, of rest, and of liberty — but they do not sever me from Lady Aurora!"

"Alas, my Miss Ellis! and have I, too, joined in the general persecution against such afflicted innocence? I feel myself the most unpardonable of all not to have acquiesced, without one ungenerous question, or even conjecture; in full reliance upon the right and the necessity of your silence. I ought to have forseen that if it were not improper you should comply, your own noble way of thinking would have made all entreaty as useless as it has been imper-

tinent. Yet when prejudice alone parts us, how could I help trying to overcome it? And even my brother, though he would forfeit, I believe, his life in your defence; and though he says he is sure you are all purity and virtue; and though he thinks that there is nothing upon earth that can be compared with you;— even he has been brought to agree to the cruel resolution, that I should defer knitting myself closer to my Miss Ellis, till she is able to have the goodness to let us know—"

She stopt, alarmed, for the cheeks of Juliet were suddenly dyed with the deepest crimson; though the transient tint faded away as she pronounced, "Lord Melbury!—even Lord Melbury!—" and they became pale as death, while, in a faint voice, and with stifled emotion, she added, "He is right! He acts as a brother; and as a brother to a sister whom he can never sufficiently appreciate.—And yet, the more I esteem his circumspection, the

more deeply I must be wounded that calumny,—that mystery,—that dire circumstance, should make me seem dangerous, where, otherwise—"

Unable longer to constrain her feelings, she sunk upon a seat and wept.

"O Miss Ellis? What have I done?" cried Lady Aurora. "How have I been so barbarous, so inconsiderate, so unwise? If my poor brother had caused you this pain, how should I have blamed him? And how grievously would he have repented! How severely, then, ought I to be reproached! I who have done it myself, without his generous precipitancy of temper to palliate such want of reflection!—"

The sudden entrance of Selina here interrupted the conversation. She came tripping forward, to acquaint Lady Aurora that the party had just discerned a magnificent vessel; and that every body said if her ladyship did not come directly, it would be sailed away.

At sight of Juliet, she ran to embrace

her, with the warmest expressions of friendship; unchecked by a coldness which she did not observe, though now, from the dissatisfaction excited by so unseasonable an intrusion, it was far more marked, than while it had been under the qualifying influence of contempt.

But when she found that neither caresses, nor kind words, could make her share with Lady Aurora, even for a moment, the attention of Juliet, she became a little confused; and, drawing her apart, asked what was the matter? consciously, without waiting for any answer, running into a string of simple apologies, for not speaking to her in public; which she should always, she said, do with the greatest pleasure; for she thought her the most agreeable person in the whole world; if it were not, that, nobody knowing her, it would look so odd.

All answer, save a smile half disdainful, half pitying, was precluded by the

appearance of the Arramedes, Mrs. Ireton, and Miss Brinville; who announced to Lady Aurora that the ship was already out of sight.

Upon perceiving Juliet, they were nearly as much embarrassed as herself; for though she instantly retreated, it was evident that she had been sitting by the side of Lady Aurora, in close and amicable conference.

An awkward general silence ensued, when Juliet, hearing other steps, was moving off; but Lady Aurora, following, and holding out her hand, affectionately said, " Are you going, Miss Ellis? Must you go? And will you not bid me adieu?"

Touched to the soul at this public mark of kindness, Juliet was gratefully returning, when the voice of Lord Melbury spoke his near approach. Trembling and changing colour, her folded hands demanded excuse of Lady Aurora for a precipitate yet reluctant flight; but she had still found neither time nor

means to escape, when Lord Melbury, who was playing with young Loddard, entered the gallery, saying, "Aurora, your genealogical studies have lost you a most beautiful sea-view."

The boy, spying Juliet, whom he was more than ever eager to join when he saw that she strove to avoid notice; darted from his lordship, calling out, Ellis! Ellis! look! look! here's Ellis!"

Lord Melbury, with an air of the most animated surprize and delight, darted forward also, exclaiming, "Miss Ellis! How unexpected a pleasure! The moment I saw Mrs. Ireton I had some hope I might see, also, Miss Ellis —but I had already given it up as delusory."

Again the fallen countenance of Juliet brightened into sparkling beauty. The idea that even Lord Melbury had been infected by the opinions which had been circulated to her disadvantage, had wounded, had stung her to the quick: but to find that, notwithstanding he had

been prevailed upon to acquiesce that his sister, while so much mystery remained, should keep personally aloof, his own sentiments of esteem remained unshaken; and to find it by so open, and so prompt a testimony of respect and regard, displayed before the very witnesses who had sought to destroy, or invalidate, every impression that might be made in her favour, was a relief the most exquisitely welcome to her disturbed and fearful mind.

Eager and rapid enquiries concerning her health, uttered with the ardour of juvenile vivacity, succeeded this first address. The party standing by, looked astonished, even abashed; while the face of Lady Aurora recovered its wonted expression of sweet serenity.

Mrs. Ireton, now, was seized with a desire the most violent, to repossess a *protegée* whose history and situation seemed daily to grow more wonderful. With a courtesy, therefore, as foreign from her usual manners, as from her real

feelings, she said, " Miss Ellis, I am sure, will have the goodness to help me home with my two little companions? I am sure of that. She could not be so unkind as to leave the poor little things in the lurch?"

Indignant as Juliet had felt at the treatment which she had received, resentment at this moment found no place in her mind; she was beginning, therefore, a civil, however decided excuse; when Mrs. Ireton, suspicious of her purpose, flung herself languishingly upon a seat, and complained that she was seized with such an immoderate pain in her side, that, if somebody would not take care of the two *little souls*, she should arrive at Brighthelmstone a corpse.

The Arramedes, Miss Brinville, and Selina, all declared that it was impossible to refuse so essential a service to a health so delicate.

The fear, now, of a second public scene, with the dread lest Lord Melbury might be excited to speak or act in her

favour, forced the judgment of Juliet to conquer her inclination, in leading her to defer the so often given dismission till her return to Brighthelmstone; she acceded, therefore, though with cruel unwillingness, to what was required.

Mrs. Ireton instantly recovered; and with the more alacrity, from observing that Lady Barbara Frankland joined the group, at this moment of victory. "Take the trouble, then, if you please, Ma'am," she replied, in her usual tone of irony; "if it will not be too great a condescension, take the trouble to carry Bijou to the coach. And bid Simon keep him safe while you come back,—if it is not asking quite too great a favour,—for Mr. Loddard. And pray bring my wrapping cloak with you, Ma'am. You'll be so good, I hope, as to excuse all these liberties? I hope so, at least! I flatter myself you'll excuse them. And, if the cloak should be heavy, I dare say Simon will give you his arm. Simon is

a man of gallantry, I make no doubt. Not that I pretend to know; but I take it for granted he is a man of gallantry."

Juliet looked down, repentant to have placed herself, even for another moment, in a power so merciless. Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora, each hurt and indignant, advanced, uttering kind speeches: while Lady Barbara, still younger and more unguarded, seizing the little dog, exclaimed "No, I'll carry Bijou myself, Mrs. Ireton. Poor Miss Ellis looks so tired! I'll take care of him all the way to Brighthelmstone myself. Dear, pretty little creature!" Then, skipping behind Lady Aurora, "Nasty whelp!" she whispered, "how I'll pinch him for being such a plague to that sweet Miss Ellis! Perhaps that will mend him!"

The satisfaction of Lady Aurora at this trait glistened in her soft eyes; while Lord Melbury, enchanted, caught the hand of the spirited little lady, and pressed it to his lips; though, ashamed

of his own vivacity, he let it go before she had time to withdraw it. She coloured deeply, but visibly with no unpleasant sensation; and, grasping the little dog, hid her blushes, by uttering a precipitate farewell upon the bosom of Lady Aurora; who smilingly, though tenderly, kissed her forehead.

An idea that teemed with joy and happiness rose high in the breast of Juliet, as she looked from Lord Melbury to Lady Barbara. Ah! there, indeed, she thought, felicity might find a residence! there, in the rare union of equal worth, equal attractions, sympathising feelings, and similar condition!

"And I, too," cried Lord Melbury, "must have the honour to make myself of some use; if Mrs. Ireton, therefore, will trust Mr. Loddard to my care, I will convey him safely to Brighthelmstone, and overtake my sister in the evening. And by this means we shall lighten the fatigue of Mrs. Ireton, without increasing that of Miss Ellis."

He then took the little boy in his arms; playfully dancing him before the little dog in those of Lady Barbara.

The heart of Juliet panted to give utterance to the warm acknowledgments with which it was fondly beating; but mingled fear and discretion forced her to silence.

All the evil tendencies of malice, envy, and ill will, pent up in the breast of Mrs. Ireton, now struggled irresistibly for vent; yet to insist that Juliet should take charge of Mr. Loddard, for whom Lord Melbury had offered his services; or even to force upon her the care of the little dog, since Lady Barbara had proposed carrying him herself, appeared no longer to exhibit dependency: Mrs. Ireton, therefore, found it expedient to be again taken ill; and, after a little fretful moaning, "I feel quite shaken," she cried, "quite in a tremour. My feet are absolutely numbed. Do get me my furred clogs, Miss Ellis; if I may

venture to ask such a favour. I would not be troublesome, but you will probably find them in the carriage. Though perhaps I have left them in the hall. You will have the condescension to help the coachman and Simon to make a search. And then pray run back, if i won't fatigue you too much, and tie them on for me."

If Juliet now coloured, at least it was not singly; the cheeks of Lady Aurora, of Lady Barbara, and of Lord Melbury were equally crimsoned.

"Let me, Mrs. Ireton," eagerly cried Lord Melbury "have the honour to be Miss Ellis's deputy."

"No, my lord," said Juliet, with spirit: "grateful and proud as I should feel to be honoured with your lordship's assistance, it must not be in a business that does not belong to me. I will deliver the orders to Simon. And as Mrs. Ireton is now relieved from her anxiety concerning Mr. Loddard, I beg permis-

sion, once more, and finally, to take my leave."

Gravely then courtsying to Mrs. Ireton, and bowing her head with an expression of the most touching sensibility to her three young supporters, she quitted the gallery.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Strahan and Preston,
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